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COMMONWEAL

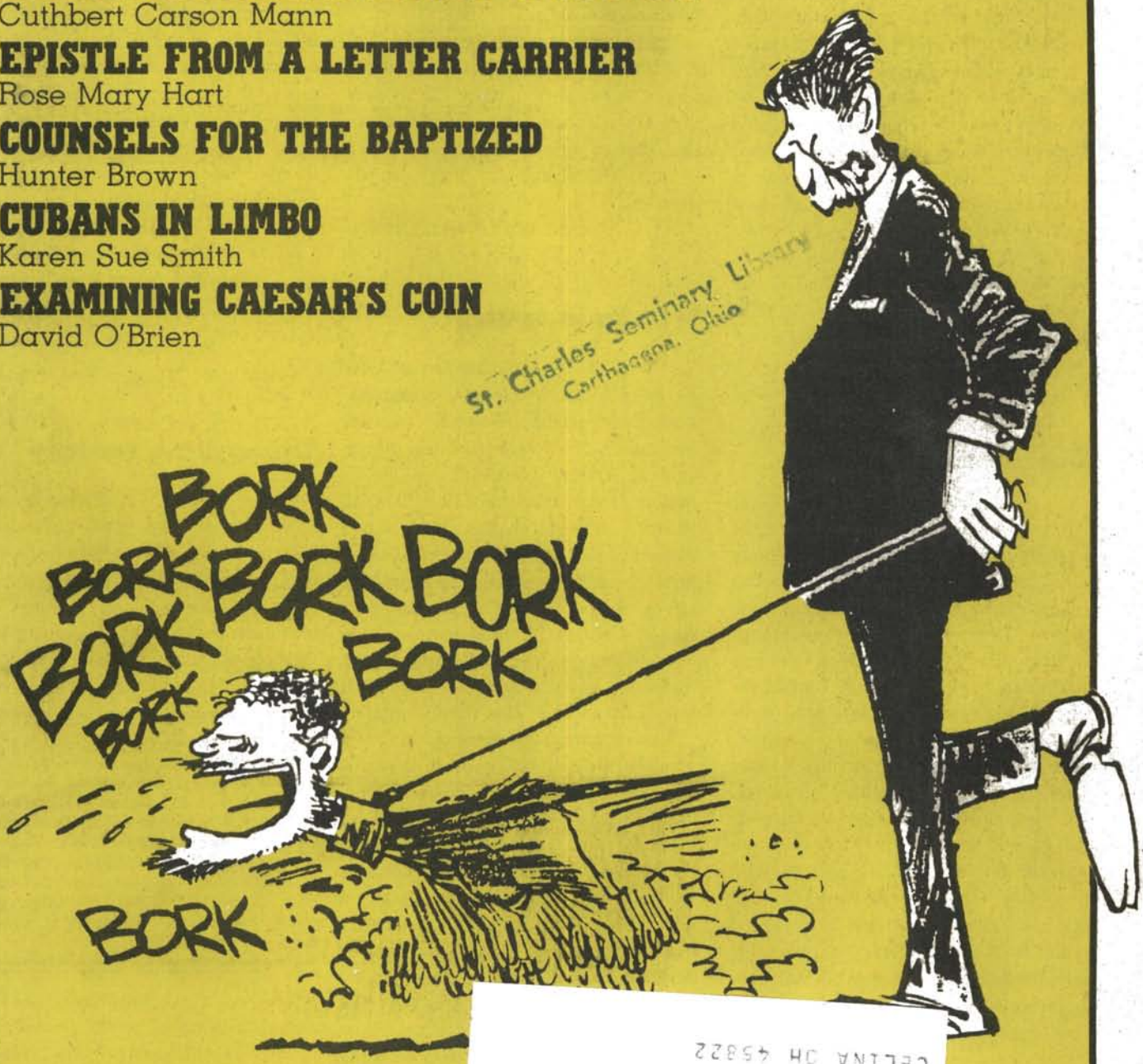
THE EMPIRE'S LAST TWITCH
Cuthbert Carson Mann

EPISTLE FROM A LETTER CARRIER
Rose Mary Hart

COUNSELS FOR THE BAPTIZED
Hunter Brown

CUBANS IN LIMBO
Karen Sue Smith

EXAMINING CAESAR'S COIN
David O'Brien



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CORRESPONDENCE

Little shop of horrors

WOMEN IN ANDREW GREELEY'S FICTION

A clear-eyed view

Ridgewood, N.J.

To the Editors: Let us praise Mary Zeiss Stange, whose "Little Shop of Horrors" July 17 has rendered an immense service to truth, art, and religion by revealing Andrew Greeley's nasty little secret: he really doesn't like women as much as he protests he does. Actually, it shouldn't have been that much of a secret since the Greeley canon abounds in rape narratives, and his heroines never even get to first base without the protection of a strong and understanding male figure.

But not everyone reads texts with as clear an eye as Miss Stange. And we can thank her for not scrupling to use the ultimate weapon against Greeley's pretensions: quoting him at length.

MICHAEL GALLAGHER

Enchanting heroines

North Massapequa, N.Y.

To the Editors: It is unfortunate that the term "Feminist" is seemingly becoming an excuse for unprovoked attacks, both in and out of print, against men. "Little Shop of Horrors" by Mary Zeiss Stange in your July 17 issue, indeed falls into that category. This time, of course, the target is Andrew M. Greeley and his writings. However, the author of this lengthy and tiresome tirade not only insults Greeley and his compelling creativity, she does an equal disservice to his multitude of female readers. Most of whom also consider themselves Feminists, with a capital F. Obviously we would not read and enjoy all of his writings, if we agreed with Ms. Stange, unless we perhaps fell into the category of being not only oblivious but also insensitive.

The appeal of the Greeley books lies in their honesty of character portrayal, both male and female. The situations encountered by people who become life-like after the first few pages may be more provocative, perhaps even more exotic than most of us encounter. But after all, isn't that part of the fun of reading a good novel? Greeley's books lead us into the wonder of his "Greeley-land" and the beauty, style, and grace of all his heroines enchant us.

The Greeley message is not intended to be a fairy tale; rather it is a beautifully crafted message presenting life as it is with all its flaws and valleys and yet with a message of hope, love, and joy. What a loss that Ms. Stange was unable to perceive this.

ANNE DONLON ACHENBACH

Women in control?

Bowling Green, Ohio

To the Editors: While Ms. Stange has done us a valuable service by focusing our attention on a most important dimension of Andrew Greeley's best-selling fiction in her article ["Little Shop of Horrors" July 17], she has also done us a disservice by not presenting the issues in their complete context. We must take strong exception to her claim that in his fiction Greeley is "perpetuating, and even claiming sacramental status for, the traditional partriarchal stereotypes of female sexuality." That simply ain't so.

The argument that Greeley and even some of the scholars writing about his work seem to rely heavily on partriarchal categories of interpretation of literary modes seems silly — who doesn't? Feminist critics seem to want heroines who are in control. (In pornography a woman has clear and complete control over herself and a man.) And Greeley certainly understands, perhaps intuitively, that in some mysterious way women do have the upper hand. He is hardly some exploiter trying to write pot-boilers/bodice-busters. Rape and abuse may be plot devices for creating best-sellers, but from the texts of his non-fictional as well as fictional writing it is clear that he knows women triumph over these things and because of them become more saintly than a man ever can — whatever the abuses they may suffer.

As serious students of Greeley's work, we are aware that he understands something most women (especially feminist critics) do not seem to know about existence. It is a grace to have been born female. There is more God in femaleness than in maleness, and stories from the dawn of time have carried the message to those who would listen.

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Assoc. Dean, College of Arts & Sciences

Unmasking fantasy

Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Editors: Countless novels (both historical and contemporary) portray women as the "suffering" sex, and countless women happily purchase and read these books. Why? Because most of these books are written by female au-

(Continued on page 571)

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COMMONWEAL

CONTENTS

Volume CXIV, Number 17

Correspondence	546
Editorials	547
The economic superstate: *John Doyle*	549
Imprisoned in limbo: *Karen Sue Smith*	552
A party of outsiders: *David R. Carlin, Jr.*	553
The time is not yet: *Abigail McCarthy*	554
I can no longer remain a bystander: *Rose Mary Hart*	556
Counsels for the baptized: *Hunter Brown*	558
The empire's last nervous twitch: *Cuthbert Carson Mann*	562
Screen: *Tom O'Brien*	565
Verse: *Mike Carson*	566

BOOKS

Caesar's Coin: *David O'Brien*	567
Spirits and Other Stories: *Thomas Cahill*	568
The Cult of the Virgin Mary: *Lawrence S. Cunningham*	569
Sufficiently Radical: *Timothy A. Byrnes*	571

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Battle of the Bork

Robert H. Bork is the right's right man at the wrong time. He is a genial, intelligent, honest representative of a judicial philosophy with which we have considerable sympathy and a political outlook with which we don't. There are a number of influential positions we would be eager to see a Robert Bork fill. The swing vote on the Supreme Court of the United States is not one of them.

This is a conclusion reached reluctantly but reached nonetheless. Some—not all—of Bork's critics have created a caricature of the man and his thought. It is hard to swallow the indignation over this political demagoguery voiced by yesterday's defenders of Ollie North, but a lot of fair-minded people must nonetheless be feeling an impulse to accept the nominee if only to reject the caricature. What is more, some of the positions that many—again, not all—of Bork's opponents hold most strongly against him are positions that, in our eyes, argue in his favor.

To begin with, there is *Roe v. Wade*. Mr. Bork has kept pretty mum on his *moral* stance toward abortion; it may or may not be similar to ours. But his *constitutional* objection is one we—and a host of constitutional scholars—have been expounding for almost fifteen years. *America* magazine concluded its editorial on the Bork nomination by saying, "If Mr. Bork's opinion of *Roe v. Wade* is to be the litmus test of his suitability, then he passes." We agree. *If*. There is, however, a lot more to his candidacy than that.

There are, most prominently, the questions of judicial philosophy—original intent, interpretivism, judicial restraint, and all that. By now it should be seen that these questions are ones of balance and degree. A judicial philosophy that limited the role of justices to some sort of literal or mechanical application of the Constitution's text is theoretically naive and practically unworkable—and, if it were not, it would be dangerous. Our constitutional order has survived to no small extent because of the generality of the Framers' phrases and the flexibility of the Court.

By now, however, it should be evident that Judge Bork does not adhere to any such "strict" philosophy. The duty of judges is rather to identify "core values" in constitutional provisions and apply them to current problems. How far from the specific text can one go in seeking the "core value" in order to find a relevant guide for resolving today's disputes? What separates Mr. Bork from most liberal counterparts turns out to be less a matter of sharp principle than a relative degree of reluctance to interfere with settled ways or the decisions of elected branches.

There is much to be said for this reluctance. As democrats (small "d"), we have to admit that the Supreme Court is the most elitist of our governing institutions. Liberals have often turned too readily to the courts, rather than legislatures, to pursue their objectives, and in the upshot, liberal politics have probably suffered for it. In any case, there is no reason conservatives cannot be as aggressive as liberals in interpreting the

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Constitution in light of their political preferences. A Rehnquist Court may very well teach liberals to appreciate the virtue of genuine judicial restraint.

But Bork's brand of reluctance is also troubling. Precisely because the courts and the Court are more isolated from popular politics, they have often become the last recourse of individuals and minorities whom popular politics exclude or whom government has injured. Judge Bork's proclivity to limit access to the courts by denying litigants standing or by affirming governmental immunity is profoundly unsettling. Furthermore, it is no good deferring to the more democratic branches when the democratic process itself can be blocked by gerrymandering, government secrecy, restrictions of free speech, or, perhaps in the future, patterns of campaign funding. Judge Bork's opposition to the one-man, one-vote decision is disturbing. We wish his brand of judicial restraint were tempered with the kind of argument John Hart Ely has made in favor of judicial activism when the openness of the political process itself is at stake.

If the Robert H. Bork who testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee was seen to have a more flexible judicial philosophy than did the Robert H. Bork of his earlier academic career, that only shifts the spotlight from one issue to another. A "strict constructionist" Bork, if such a thing were possible, would be one whose own political outlook was not of great consequence. Indeed, Bork's critics have pointed to definite patterns in his decisions, arguing that he is "result-oriented" in a way entirely inconsistent with his claims simply to be applying the law without regard to personal values. The question of consistency may not loom so large now that the supposed gap in judicial philosophies is seen to be narrower—but the question of political outlook is only emphasized.

All his life Robert Bork has been not just a scholar but an intensely political person. So have been most of the great Supreme Court justices. Bork's politics, however, have always been in defense of established "systems"— whether the free market or Madisonian majoritarianism or Burkean gradualism—the maintenance of which he inevitably sees as the first priority for the well-being of all. At every point where individuals and groups have remonstrated, insisting that the "systems" consistently violated the human dignity of some citizens and constricted their potential, Bork's considerable powers of intellect have always turned to finding fault with the remonstrance. Almost instinctively he multiplies and magnifies the dangers of change, not the costs or irrationalities of the status quo. There is no engagement in a Sacco and Vanzetti case in Bork's past, as there was with the original evangelist of judicial restraint, Felix Frankfurter. Of course, once the insurgencies against the "system" have succeeded, once they can be seen as benefiting all, or at least as irreversibly institutionalized, then a Robert Bork acknowledges their crucial value. Yet his belated endorsements show no sign that he would react differently to the *new* challenges that have not already been ratified by years of political struggle and social change.

Judge Bork is no extremist. *Pace* Senator Kennedy, in Bork's America there would not be rogue police breaking down citizens' doors at midnight. But there is a definite cast of mind at work here, a moral imagination alive to one set of difficulties, distant or dispassionate about another. Many observers have noted the "scorn" or "contempt" in Bork's treatment of so many constitutional rationales for change; to our ears, this is not just the academic style talking but the political worldview.

Judge Bork may be right in protesting that he has no "ideological agenda" for the Court—if you stress the word "agenda." It would be silly to think he has no ideology. This one-time Scholar for Goldwater has not been mistaken by the conservative administrations and think tanks which have taken him to their bosoms. The deference to business that colors his thinking is one part of that ideology. A part that concerns us even more is his deference to executive power. We see no evidence that a Justice Bork would provide a principled conservative obstacle to the single greatest threat to our constitutional order—the expansion of executive power, primarily on national security grounds, and the executive's ability through secrecy or administrative leverage to escape democratic control. To the contrary, Bork's opinions on the War Powers Act, the special prosecutor law, and congressional standing to challenge executive actions in court reveal that his brand of conservatism may end up more Napoleonic than Madisonian.

The Bork hearings have been the most important event of the Constitution's bicentennial. They provided the public with a remarkable discussion of constitutional issues. Judge Bork himself performed admirably. We are tempted to conclude that it was a good thing Mr. Bork was nominated. Now it would be a better thing if the Senate, thoughtfully and without hysteria or recriminations, voted down the nomination.

EAR OF THE BEHOLDER

"Just as the Women Said" is a phrase taken from the account in Luke's Gospel in which several women disciples, who had witnessed Jesus' empty tomb and had told the apostles about it, were not believed. The men felt they had to go to the site themselves, where they found it "just as the women said."

"Just as the Women Said" is also the title of a pastoral letter calling for fuller participation of women in the church, issued in August by Los Angeles Archbishop Roger Mahony. The title is particularly appropriate in that, after having listened to some 2,500 women of the diocese, the archbishop has found that the church itself is basically, and tragically, just as the women said. At least, that is what we ascertain given the list of correctives Mahony's pastoral outlines.

Though Mahony never mentions women's ordination, he is calling for: (1) the maximization of inclusive language in writing, speaking, teaching, and preaching, including references to God fashioned after those biblical passages wherein God is likened to a female; (2) the creation of new collaborative (male/female) ministries including policy formation and decision making.

Furthermore, he has begun planning for a service of recon-

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ciliation at the cathedral — in the spirit of the apology Pope Paul VI offered at Vatican II for the responsibility Roman Catholics bear for divisions within the Christian church. While we recognize the genuine good will behind such a public act of reconciliation, and think that it could provide a healing of sorts, care should be taken not to promise more than can be delivered. Women want real justice, not mere empathy with their plight or salve for their wounds.

Perhaps the best measure of the changes now taking place within the U.S. Catholic hierarchy is that this time it was Archbishop Rembert Weakland — not Sister Theresa Kane —who addressed Pope John Paul II saying: "There are no words to explain so much pain on the part of so many competent women today who feel they are second-class citizens in a church they love....Women...want to be seen as necessary to the full life of a church that teaches and shows by example the co-discipleship of the sexes as instruments of God's Kingdom." Had Sister Kane been asked by the pope to express her thoughts to him once again, this might be a different church. But even these lesser changes — new heralds of the women's message — prove that, indeed, someone has been listening to what the women have said.

THE RULE OF REASON

President Reagan's pronouncement that the Central American peace accord fashioned by Costa Rican President Arias Sanchez is "fatally flawed" was spoken by one with far too little familiarity with such accords himself. To the relatives of the 60,000 Salvadorans and the 20,000 Nicaraguans who have perished in civil strife in the last eight years, even a flawed plan is better than none at all, monumentally better.

"Potempkin reforms," President Reagan belittles the changes in Nicaragua, "mere show," "cosmetic changes." Is he referring to the return of the exiled Msgr. Carballo, and the reopening of Managua's Catholic radio station? Or to the appointment of Cardinal Obando as head of the Nicaraguan national reconciliation committee? Perhaps he is speaking about the return to publication of the opposition paper *La Prensa*? Or does he mean the suggestion of the Sandinista Rafael Cedra, speaker of the National Assembly, that ceasefire talks take place between the government and the *contras* through an intermediary such as Cardinal Obando?

As the parties to the accord would probably admit in their more candid moments, their agreement was predicated on self-interest as well as on more altruistic goals. None of the governments involved, with the exception of Costa Rica, has a democratic history on which to rely. Take Guatemala, hardly a beacon of liberty. The local civilian defense committees there are notoriously ruthless. They make the Sandinista neighborhood committees, whose abolition Reagan now demands, look positively genteel. The Guatemalan groups are not likely to disappear because of the Arias accord. And in El Salvador, the army is not likely to accept long-term, wide-ranging proposals that would bring it under genuine civil control.

President Reagan is not entirely wrong when he anticipates that the Sandinistas will not have undergone a total conversion by November 7. They will be compelled to make concessions, but they are not about to abandon what they believe is their historic mandate to hold power. That will also be true of the authoritarian elements in the other signing governments.

None of these shortcomings offers sufficient reason to erect insurmountable roadblocks and sow new mines of suspicion and conflict. Nor should the U.S. simply bide its time before declaring the Arias effort a failure on November 8. Despite the plan's limitations and the likelihood that more than one Central American government will try to bend its provisions to their own advantage, the treaty remains the best prospect for peace available. In addition to the Nicaraguan developments already mentioned, the two sides of the Salvadoran conflict will meet this month under the auspices of Archbishop Rivera y Damas, and opposition leader Ruben Zamora has made plans to return to El Salvador after seven years of exile. Edén Pastora, an opponent of the Sandinistas, now says that he may one day return to Nicaragua. When the five countries of the accord met last month in Managua with eight other Latin American countries, significant progress was made on refugee resettlement.

There is much to be done. The question of amnesty is far from being settled, and the question of political rights is even more complicated. It *will* take time, and Central American time. As President Arias told the U.S. Congress last month, "We strive for common goals, others may require a longer period. We will not fall into a trap set by someone who shows us the calendar every day, anxious to bury the last hope. We have opened the door to the rule of reason in Central America....Let us restore faith in dialogue and give peace a chance."

SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT

THE ECONOMIC SUPERSTATE

CLOSING UP A CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

When the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957, the six countries which comprised the newly created European Common Market had as their ultimate goal a United Europe without barriers to the free movement of trade, commerce, and people. Thirty years later the Common Market has become the European Economic Community. It has doubled in size to twelve countries, and has a population of 320 million people. It is still trying to achieve its goal.

The drive for a United Europe is being relaunched this year with the ratification, by all twelve E.E.C. countries, of the Single European Act. The Act will bring about major changes

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in the way in which the E.E.C. operates internally and deals with the rest of the world. For years it has been clear that a major rejuvenation of the Common Market spirit was necessary to counteract the endless internal bickering over the Common Agricultural Policy and the E.E.C. budget. When Spain and Portugal joined the community last year and the E.E.C. expanded to embrace all of Europe (except for Austria and Switzerland) and the British Isles, the need for internal cohesion became even more urgent.

The twelve countries have now set the year 1992 as their deadline for removing all internal trade barriers. While many Europeans believe that the five-year timetable is unrealistic, the Single European Act has created an air of optimism that hasn't been evident in the E.E.C. since Britain, Denmark, and Ireland became members in 1973. That optimism, coupled with a new determination to present a united front to the rest of the world, has already been in evidence this year during the community's trade war with the U.S. The E.E.C. is no longer unnerved by American threats of trade sanctions or the possibility of trade disputes damaging political relations between the U.S. and Europe.

The most dramatic change brought about by the new Act will be a streamlining of the E.E.C.'s decision-making procedure. Until now, the European Council, made up of the heads of state and governments, had to reach unanimous agreement before a decision could be implemented. Under the new act, a qualified majority will be sufficient. There will be seventy-six votes spread among the twelve countries, with the four largest (Britain, France, West Germany, and Italy) having ten votes each, and the remainder divided up among the smaller countries on the basis of size and contributions to the E.E.C. budget. A qualified majority will be fifty-four votes. This means, in effect, that seven countries can make decisions for the entire community.

It does not mean, however, that the smaller countries can always be forced to go along with majority decisions. The Act leaves intact the so-called Luxembourg Compromise, under which countries can veto a majority decision on the grounds that national interests are compromised. In the past, the European Council has taken a hard line on the use of the Luxembourg Compromise, rarely allowing it to be used for blatantly frivolous or self-serving reasons.

Another significant change brought about by the Act is a modest enhancing of the role and stature of the European Parliament. The Parliament, to which members from all E.E.C. countries have been directly elected since 1979, has never had the power to bind the community by its decisions. It has, more often than not, been a forum for grandstanding on issues that concern the smaller countries. Now the Council will be required to take into account the views and proposals expressed by the Parliament before the Council reaches any decisions that affect all twelve countries. Furthermore, any Council decision debated and rejected by Parliament will have to be passed again by the Council with complete unanimity, rather than a qualified majority. The Act is seen as striking the right balance between giving the Parliament more work to do and yet not allowing it to infringe upon the sovereignty of individual governments.

The rest of the world will see one major alteration in the way in which the E.E.C. operates as a result of the new Act: the community will be able to co-ordinate positions more swiftly and easily on major international developments. The necessity of reaching unanimity was underlined last year when the E.E.C. was unable to act quickly in the wake of the Chernobyl accident. For weeks after the disaster, as rainfall carried varying degrees of contamination onto crops in most of the twelve countries, mutual distrust prevented the Community from reaching a quick decision on maximum toleration levels. In the end, only an ad-hoc solution was reached, and countries decided on their own regulations. The community experienced a similar impasse last year when it attempted to formulate a coherent policy on sanctions against South Africa.

The Single European Act did not come into being without a good deal of debate and argument. Britain, Denmark, and Greece originally opposed the idea of amending the Treaty of Rome. They were concerned about a change to qualified majority voting. Britain and Greece were appeased when it became clear that a veto power would be retained. Denmark, in which there remains a strong anti-E.E.C. lobby, put the Act to its citizens in a referendum, which turned into a full-scale debate on whether Denmark should remain in the Community. Eventually, Denmark voted to adopt the Act and, ironically, became the first country to ratify it.

A far greater problem turned out to be Ireland. The Irish Parliament had actually passed the Act without much debate last year. Then, at the end of the year, a number of prominent Irish citizens, including Nobel Laureate Sean McBride, began to voice opposition to the Act, arguing that the Act's qualified voting procedure would undermine Ireland's traditional independent neutrality.

The Irish government, unprepared for this campaign against the Act, insisted that the Act covered only areas of general political cooperation. But it failed to allay the fears of a growing number of people, and on Christmas Eve 1986 an Irish economist, Raymond Crotty, obtained a court injunction restraining the government from formally ratifying the Act and lodging it with the E.E.C. Council. (The Council had set a deadline of January 1 for ratification by all twelve countries, and the injunction was a major embarrassment for the Irish government.) In mid-January 1987 the Irish Supreme Court began hearing arguments on the Act. Its decision, handed down in April, was a victory for the objectors.

The court decided that the Act would contravene Ireland's constitutionally entrenched neutrality, and Prime Minister Charles Haughey, in office for less than two months, had no choice but to call a snap referendum. The question put before the Irish people in the referendum asked if the Constitution should be amended slightly to accommodate the Act. If a majority voted "yes," then Ireland would remain a neutral country but the clause in the Constitution establishing neu-

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trality would be followed by a simple statement of support for the Single European Act. All three major political parties in Ireland were united in urging a "yes" vote and opposition was limited to the left-wing groups, who took the opportunity to condemn Ireland's very membership of the E.E.C., and by right-wing religious groups who feared that the majority voting procedure would mean that divorce and abortion legislation would be foisted on the country.

When the votes were counted on May 26, 70 percent of the voters supported the amendment. The government was then free to ratify the Act and lodge it with the E.E.C. Council. Only 46 percent of the Irish electorate voted in the referendum, indicating a lack of any real concern about the potential problems of the Act. Nonetheless, the referendum debate in Ireland did serve to clarify some of those potential problems.

The source of contention for the Irish objectors was an article in the Act which deals with European security. It declares that the E.E.C. believes that closer cooperation on questions of security would contribute in an essential way to the development of a united European identity. It also declares that the twelve countries will co-ordinate their positions more closely on the political and economic aspects of security, and that the community is determined to maintain the technological and industrial conditions necessary for its own security. While this is some distance from a clear indication that the E.E.C. intends to become an independent military organization, it does suggest that there is a faction within the E.E.C. which favors a "decoupling" from NATO. That "decoupling" may be more psychological than physical, but it presents the possibility of NATO developing two distinct pillars. (It is hardly coincidental that while the Single European Act was being debated throughout the Community, the European Parliament passed a resolution calling for a European peace, disarmament, and security policy, and for setting up a security advisory group which would articulate a distinctly European position on disarmament and on chemical and biological weapons.

The final section of the Act covers the technological and industrial conditions necessary for European security. In essence, the Act commits the E.E.C. to increased development of high technology in order to lessen dependence on the U.S. and Japan. For the European members of NATO, this is important if they are to eventually sell defense equipment to the U.S. as well as buy from it.

While security and military issues only galvanize Europe when international events demand a response, it is the more mundane issue of agriculture which dominates much of the European Council's time and energy. The E.E.C.'s growing butter and grain mountains and wine lakes are not merely an international embarrassment, they are also expensive to maintain. The enormous surplus amounts of agricultural produce, which became a topic at the Venice economic summit in June, exist because of the Community's policy of intervention buying. Intervention is the process whereby the E.E.C. buys up certain products if the market cannot absorb them. While intervention was originally designed to be a price- and market-support mechanism, it has, over time, become an end in itself for countries such as Ireland, Greece, and Portugal with poorly developed markets and marketing strategies.

A major aim of the Single European Act is to redress the principal regional imbalances which have caused the food mountains to grow. To date it has been impossible, because of the unanimous voting procedures, to dismantle the intervention buying process. For a country like Ireland, where over half the butter produced yearly is sold into intervention, the end of intervention buying would mean a radical restructuring of the entire agricultural sector of the economy.

There can be little doubt that the intention behind the Single European Act is to eventually turn Western Europe into an economic super-state. The streamlining of the E.E.C.'s decision-making procedure will have an immediate effect on trading practices within the community, and sharpen the community's ability to react in trade disputes with other trading blocs and individual countries. The Act's emphasis on security and high technology, while it marks a significant change in E.E.C. policy, is unlikely to have any visible effect on the Community or NATO in the foreseeable future.

The Single European Act is clearly not a magic wand for solving all the E.E.C.'s internal problems. If it achieves nothing else, it has already clarified the Community's problem of reaching agreement on basic issues. What the Community is hoping for now is a new mentality, a new zeal for European integration. But European integration is not synonymous with a United Europe. That is something which the Single European Act, like most Europeans, can only cautiously aspire to.

JOHN DOYLE

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IMPRISONED IN LIMBO
LIMITS OF LARGESS

Roy Bourgeois, a Maryknoll priest imprisoned for illegal acts committed to protest the U.S. training of the *contras*, recently wrote to a number of publications. The priest's letter (which was published without comment in the *National Catholic Reporter* and *Christianity & Crisis*) drew attention to some 1,000 Cuban inmates who remain imprisoned in the Federal Detention Center in Oakdale, Louisiana, even though they have already completed their criminal sentences. (Another 1,500 Cubans are held in the maximum security Atlanta Federal Penitentiary, and 300 have been held continuously for six years.) To illustrate the problem, Bourgeois, in his letter, told the story of Francisco.

Sixty-nine-year-old Francisco, Bourgeois said, landed in prison when a cab driver hauled him into the local precinct for being unable to pay a $7 cab fare. At the station, Francisco's name came up on the police computer as one of the Cuban refugees who entered the U.S. in 1980 as part of the Mariel Boat Flotilla. And therein hangs the tale.

The Mariel Flotilla began seven years ago after more than 10,000 Cubans crammed themselves into the Peruvian embassy and grounds in Havana seeking asylum. Not to be embarrassed by the growing international clamor for their right to emigrate, Fidel Castro decided to look the other way for several months, allowing some 125,000 Cubans to leave the port city of Mariel to join their relatives in the U.S. Then, as if in revenge, Castro emptied into the group several prisons and institutions for the handicapped and emotionally disturbed — "criminals and mental patients" — and denounced the entire flotilla as "Cuban scum."

Castro's act has not been forgotten. This July, Senator Albert Gore (D-Tenn.), appearing on William Buckley's "Firing Line" with six other Democratic presidential aspirants, said of Castro's action: "Where Cuba is concerned, it will take a long time for me to forget that Castro opened the prisons and sent mentally ill criminals into the U.S., loosed upon an unsuspecting population."

Unfortunately, Castro's label "Cuban scum" stuck to the Mariel refugees — including 13,000 to 18,000 children and teens — even though studies show that it is largely a misnomer. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) classified only 1.4 percent of the refugees as felons (murderers, rapists, or thieves). More problematic is the 19 percent classified ambiguously as "non-felonious criminals and political prisoners." A "crime" in Cuba includes such noncriminal offenses in the U.S. as buying food on the black (read non-governmental) market. And one would have thought we'd have welcomed political prisoners from Cuba.

In truth, what distinguished the Mariel refugees from other Cuban refugee groups who arrived in the U.S. during the previous two decades were: a larger number of mulattoes and blacks and a much younger average age. Many of the handicapped and emotionally disturbed, it turned out, were children who flooded into Miami's Dade County Public School system.

How does the story of Francisco fit into such a picture? Certainly, one cannot automatically take every inmate's story at face value. Mr. Jervis, the INS public relations man I spoke with over the telephone, said that the story of Francisco was highly unlikely. He said that the Cubans who had been detained had been convicted of acts of violence in the United States, and thereby had broken their entering status, known as parole, and are now excludable for citizenship and eligible for return to Cuba. Deportation is what had been planned for them until the broadcasts of Radio Marti angered Castro into reneging on his agreement to receive them. The U.S. broke off relations with Cuba at that juncture. Jervis acknowledged that law suits have been filed against INS for indefinitely detaining these convicts. Each case won in a lower court, however, was reversed on appeal. The Supreme Court refused to hear a 1986 case on the matter.

On the other hand, Lucas Guttentag of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) — one of the organizations that has fought against the INS and on behalf of the Cuban refugees — said the story of Francisco didn't sound far-fetched at all, considering other incidents of incarceration for minor infractions he knew about.

Last May, the ACLU and the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA filed an appeal to the UN which says: "the arbitrary and prolonged detention and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of the individuals described in this communication amount to a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights . . . and warrant an independent investigation or a thorough study by the competent United Nations authorities."

Given the circumstances surrounding the Mariel refugees — the traumatic and hasty exit of families, and the unscrupulous infusion of nearly 2,000 Cuban criminals into their ranks — it hardly seems unusual that the U.S. government would remain vigilant about assimilating the former and apprehending and detaining the latter, for the protection of its own citizens. And deportation itself doesn't seem too drastic a response to violent criminals, were the crimes fairly tried and the deportation carried out speedily. But the problem of convicted criminals and parole breakers has persisted for seven years without solution.

While the vast majority of Mariel Cubans seem to have been assimilated into the mainstream of American society by now, and most are eligible to regularize their status and begin the long process toward U.S. citizenship, the thousands of individuals languishing in prison are caught in a political impasse not of their own making. They urgently deserve a remedy —

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particularly in light of the despair and violence, both homicides and suicides, growing among Cubans inside the two prisons.

To alleviate the situation, the INS recently initiated a "status review plan" under which every Cuban in INS custody from Mariel (3,564 persons in all) is slated for a hearing to determine whether or not release should be granted. If release is denied, another hearing is scheduled within a year. At Oakdale, where Cubans have been detained since November, 1986, 163 persons have been released so far. In Atlanta's detention center, 274 have been released since 1985. In addition, some 3,659 Mariel Cubans who are not now in INS custody but who are being held by state and local authorities for other crimes, will, upon completing their sentences, be detained by INS and enter the periodic review program. Mr. Jervis said, "It is to our advantage to release people when we can. It's expensive to detain them." However, advocates concerned about justice argue that those in custody deserve legal counsel at the hearings.

The joint appeal to the UN for an investigation, which I mentioned above, is a second way to break the perpetual detention deadlock, though it has the distorting effect of making the U.S. government — rather than the Cuban government which is ultimately at fault — the object of international investigation. Still, because our legal process seems to have provided no recourse, the UN appeal may pressure the U.S. to respond to those Cubans whose human rights have been denied them. At the same time, there is no reason not to exert international pressure on Cuba to receive these citizens back. After all, exporting violent criminals is not a practice that should go unprotested either, though a convincing case can be made that it would be unjust to deport them at this point. Yet another solution has been proposed by various religious groups championing the cause of the detained Cubans, that is to release detainees to sponsors, as is customary in halfway houses for paroled prisoners, as a way of easing the transition and assigning some responsibility for refugees.

Few doubt that at least some of those Cubans now in detention are, in fact, violent criminals who have been, and may still be a danger to the community. But even violent criminals have rights in this society — whether they are citizens or not — to fair trials with legal counsel, and to release when their sentences have been served. And for those whose violence is not even a question, i.e., if there is a Francisco who has been incarcerated for two years or more, without a hearing or a trial, for cheating a cabbie out of less than ten dollars . . . that possibility demands that "due process" be enlarged to fit even the hapless political pawns who find themselves among us.

KAREN SUE SMITH

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OF SEVERAL MINDS David R. Carlin, Jr.

A PARTY OF OUTSIDERS

THE URGE TO VOTE REPUBLICAN

I read in the newspaper the other day that Mikhail Gorbachev, no doubt looking through a *glasnost* darkly, predicted that the U.S. president elected in 1988 will most definitely not be a Democrat. Apparently the general secretary has caught a glimpse of the truth also discerned by Ted Kennedy, Mario Cuomo, and Sam Nunn.

Since 1952 there have been nine presidential elections. Of these, the Democrats have won only three. And of the three, one was a squeaker (Kennedy vs. Nixon in 1960), while another (Carter vs. Ford in 1976) was won over a GOP that was carrying exceptional liabilities (Watergate, Ford's pardon of Nixon, Reagan's primary challenge of Ford).

But a losing streak, like a batting slump, is a mere fact. If the cause of the unfortunate fact is easily removable (cock your bat at a slightly different angle, open your stance a little, etc.) a dismal past record is no basis for predicting a dismal future.

So the question is: Do Democratic candidates for president lose because the party is holding its bat wrong? Or do they lose because the party is past its prime in the big league of presidential politics?

Often, of course, this question is not even asked. To this day, thirty-five years after Eisenhower's first election, many Democrats, with a blindness to reality that would do credit to a determined schizophrenic, refuse to acknowledge that their party is experiencing a profound and protracted presidential slump.

But among those who do face reality and ask the questions, the usual answer is that a relatively minor adjustment will solve the problem. There is no consensus, sorry to report, on what the adjustment should be. Some say a move to the left will help; others prefer a move to the right. Some say candidates of type A will bring the long-strayed sheep back into the fold; others believe a type B candidate will do the trick. Despite these disagreements, there is pretty general agreement that the correct ideological shifting of ground combined with the right candidate will put a Democrat in the White House again.

After all, it is plausibly argued, the Democrats control both houses of the U.S. Congress, and they control the majority of governorships and state legislatures. Below the White House level, in other words, the nation is predominantly Democratic. It is nothing more than a bizarre anomaly that a Democrat electorate should keep electing Republican pres-

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idential candidates.

I disagree with this relatively optimistic analysis, even though I belong to the class which figures prominently in that analysis, namely, the class of Democratic elected officials. It is in our class interest, at least our short-term interest, to adopt this comforting analysis; since, if it is correct, we are not faced with the heavy task of fundamentally reorienting the party. Instead, we can keep things pretty much as they are, and with a little luck we'll break out of our presidential slump.

The causes of this slump, as I see them, are deeply rooted in the history and nature of the Democratic party. Throughout most of the republic's political history, perhaps right back to the days when Jefferson and his friends were putting the party together, the Democratic party has had a special appeal to, and dependency upon, those groups who saw themselves as "outsiders," who felt that they were somehow not in the mainstream of American life. Hence the long affinity of the party with the poor, the working class, immigrants, ethnics, Catholics, Jews, and white Southerners. No matter how little sympathy some of these groups had for one another, they shared the common denominator of being "outsiders." This was sufficient to get them to suspend their differences and pledge election-day allegiance to a common political party.

Throughout most of the party's history, America's blacks were the great exception to this rule. The Democrats, so interested in marginalized groups, were not interested in downright pariahs, which is what blacks were. Besides, keeping white Southerners happy meant joining in the conspiracy against blacks, nearly all of whom lived in the South till the second and third decades of the twentieth century. In our latter, happier days, we sometimes forget that until the coming of FDR, racism was one of the chief defining characteristics of the Democratic party.

But when blacks got promoted, during the 1930s and 1940s, from pariah status to merely marginalized status, they did what nearly every other marginalized group has done: they became Democrats.

The trouble for a party of "outsiders," of course, is that there just aren't enough marginalized people in America anymore — not enough, at all events, to elect presidents. Blacks are still marginalized; so are non-Cuban Hispanics. Jews are a more ambiguous case. They are decidedly mainstream in education, income, and occupation; but they remain near the religious margin, a fact they were reminded of when Ronald Reagan, despite staying home from church on Sundays, made overt electoral appeals to Christian groups in the 1984 election; hence the Jewish vote for Mondale. But Catholics, with the notable exception of non-Cuban Hispanics, no longer feel marginalized. Nor do white Southerners.

When folks enter the American mainstream they develop powerful urges to vote Republican, which has always been the more thoroughly "Americanized" of the two parties. True, they may have a bad conscience about this, feeling it constitutes a betrayal of their forefathers, who spin in their graves every time one of the present generation votes Republican. Yet they soothe their troubled consciences by voting Democrat for lower offices, thus explaining to themselves that they are "basically Democrats" who "just happen" to vote for the Republican candidate for president every four years.

Barring some spectacular accident, there is little reason to believe that white Southerners and non-Hispanic Catholics, once the mainstay of the Democratic party, will vote anything but Republican for president in 1988. It may be an act of great historical ingratitude for traditional Democratic constituency groups to desert the party that stood by them in their less prosperous days. But history is a long tale of ingratitude, and complaining about it does not win elections.

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

THE TIME IS NOT YET

ELIZABETH DOLE STEPS DOWN

When the moment came she put the best possible face on it. "There's nothing more important than helping to choose the future leader of the free world," she said. And made it plain that what she would be doing would be no trivial "wifey" kind of campaigning. She would make a twelve-state swing through the southern states with an eye on "Super Tuesday," the multiple primary scheduled next March 8. She would operate out of an office she herself would manage in Charlotte, N.C. She would not have left the cabinet except for the most compelling of reasons, she wrote President Reagan, "the need to elect a successor who can build on your administration's achievements."

But, just days before, Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole, the only woman in the cabinet and a highly visible and popular cabinet member, had been protesting the suggestions that she resign. Why, she wanted to know, is it spouses (and she might well have said *female* spouses) who are expected to resign? She did not want to. "I love my job. It's challenging, it's tough." People didn't expect the candidates themselves to resign, she pointed out — nobody was urging George Bush to resign from the vice-presidency because he was campaigning for president. But *she* was being criticized for taking nine days of her vacation time to campaign for her husband, Senator Robert Dole.

In several newspapers, including the *New York Times*, it was rather unkindly pointed out that the parallel did not hold since the vice-president's office was largely ceremonial and hardly crucial,

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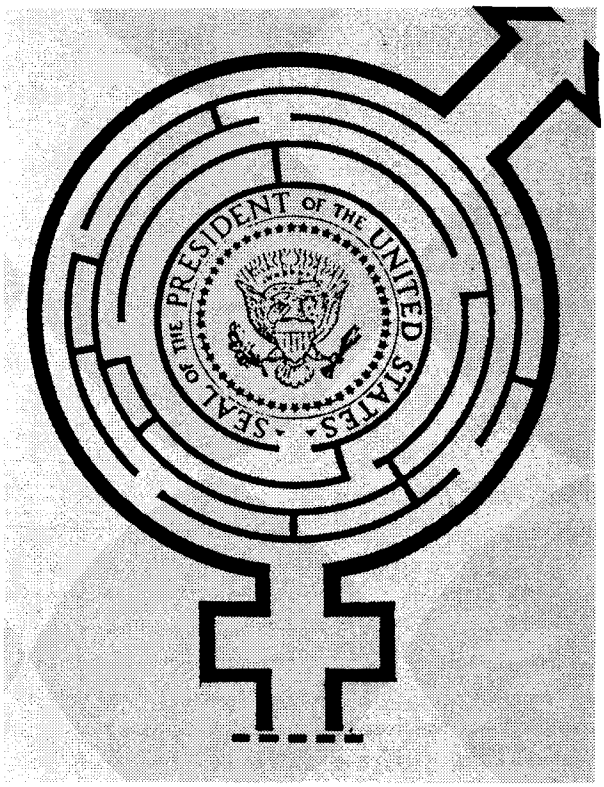
whereas the secretary of transportation was involved in things vital to the nation like dealing with the troubled airline industry. Elizabeth Dole, however, might just as well have inquired why no one had suggested that Senator Simon or Congressman Jack Kemp resign — there is nothing ceremonial about their roles or of the other congresspersons running for president either. (True, there had been some talk before he withdrew for other reasons about whether Senator Biden could handle the judiciary hearings and run, but that touches the other side of the coin — the possibility that publicity gained from holding office may hurt or enhance a candidate's chances, single him out of the pact, as it were. Can anyone doubt that some of the criticism aimed at Mrs. Dole was motivated by the fact that her high visibility in office was seen as added visibility for her husband?)

Not so long ago there was speculation — and it was not frivolous — as to which Dole might run for president. Elizabeth Dole is a woman with a government career history of her own. A Harvard-trained lawyer, she has served under four administrations starting as staff assistant in Lyndon Johnson's Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, later as legislative assistant to his consumer affairs adviser, and then as executive director of the President's Commission on Consumer Interest. In 1973 she was appointed to the Federal Trade Commission, from which she resigned to campaign for her husband's unsuccessful bid for the presidency in 1979. In 1980 she joined the Reagan White House as special assistant for public liaison, and in 1983 became secretary of transportation.

Party preferences aside, viewed objectively, Elizabeth Dole's credentials for executive office are impressive: she has experience in domestic areas of pressing interest — health, education, welfare, consumer problems, transportation — and a solid history in one of our most difficult foreign problems, trade. She has enjoyed good relations with Congress and the business community. She is popular in her native South.

Not so long ago, too, in articles and speeches on the changing status of women, the point was being made that, just as the Nixon administration had been able to do what the Democrats did not dare in normalizing relations with China, the Reagan administration had broken precedent in appointing the qualified wives of congressmen and public officials to high office. Of these, Dole was best known, but there were significant numbers of others, among them Lynne Cheney, wife of the Wyoming congressman, who heads the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Wendy Lee Gramm, wife of the senator from Texas, who is an administrator at the Office of Management and Budget. It was a measure of progress, women leaders said, that these women could hold offices in the executive branch in which they might come into conflict with the legislative branch in which their husbands served — and not be seen as hurting their husbands politically. It was also a measure of progress that they were seen as strong administrators in their own right in every way equal to their male contemporaries. The administration in appointing them ratified the feminist contention that wives had a right to jobs for which experience and training prepared them no matter who their husbands were.



Some women leaders now question Elizabeth Dole's resignation and the message it has for wives. We will never know whether she ever gave a passing or serious thought to a possible candidacy of her own, but, of course, in the end it was never a real option. She was a woman and a wife, and her husband wanted to run for president. We do know that she gave very serious thought to staying in the important job she held and that it took real pressure to bring about her decision to leave it. Hence the pressure? First of all, we are told, from the campaign staff. She had proved herself an asset in 1980, and will, they think, be a tremendous asset now. She is charming, a sought after speaker, in command of the issues, and has the Southern woman's gift of persuasion. There was pressure of a different kind from Dole supporters who felt that the storms surrounding her department could affect the campaign adversely. She surely felt the pressures of wifehood — a need to help her husband — and of tradition and family (she consulted her older brother before she acted).

It all seems to prove that the time is not yet that a woman's right to her work is equal to her husband's, *if*, that is, the two should seem to conflict in importance. Has any progress been made? Well, yes, some; and it is not insignificant. A woman has been able to protest having to leave her work and has been generally understood and sympathized with. And when she has done what she can for her husband, Elizabeth Dole will not have the bitter experience of which one political wife wrote only ten years ago — "I was needed all right — like a Barbie-doll who makes speeches; send me out on campaign for a year, then fold me and file me in a drawer." No, Elizabeth Dole will go back to work somewhere, somehow, and no one will be censorious or surprised. That is a gain.

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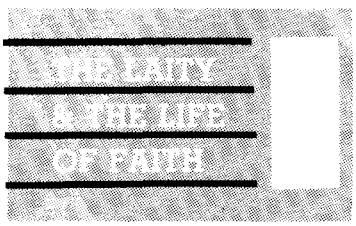
I CAN NO LONGER REMAIN A BYSTANDER

EPISTLE FROM A LETTER CARRIER

ROSE MARY HART



It was a day of great joy when the Postal Service called me for a job interview just two months after I completed high school. At the time, my main reason for wanting to work for the Postal Service was that it was outdoor work and a job through which I could meet a lot of people. Little did I realize how God was preparing me for a lifetime of special service in and through the people and events that constitute a career as a letter carrier.

From the very beginning I worked hard on punctuality and efficiency. These are sources of pride for letter carriers. I also quickly realized how dependent people are on such services, especially the elderly and the shut-ins. I would acknowledge the greetings of those I passed on the street, but very rarely would say anything else. Being a rather shy and quiet eighteen-year-old trying to learn how to handle the adult world of everyday work was difficult enough.

This style of work lasted for the first seven years of my career. Through all of it, God was laying the groundwork for future ministry by establishing a relationship of trust and dependency among the people I served as well as the crew I worked with. This trust was the key which opened the way for my later involvement in what is now my parish. Because people knew me from work and trusted me, they began to accept me in areas of parish ministry which had previously been closed to women, especially women under twenty-five.

In the spring of 1976, two events took place which set the stage for me to connect faith and work in a vital way. The first was an invitation to make a Cursillo. I had started praying with a Charismatic prayer group in the fall of 1975. As the search for purpose and meaning in life continued, I began to look for other ways to grow in my relationship with Jesus. The Cursillo was a profound experience which totally convinced me that there was a new way to live and relate to all I did. I still remember very clearly how I stood up at the closing Mass and said, "There are two ways to carry mail: You can carry it. Or, you can carry it!" From that day on, life for me as a letter carrier has been changed.

I now see my overall supervisor as the Lord Jesus. He is present and active through the regular supervisors and/or postmasters. I feel an accountability to the Lord for how I do my job each day: Have I done my best for all concerned: bosses, people served, myself?

I believe that Jesus has given me a mission to proclaim him to all in faith, hope, and love. No longer do I wait for others to greet me on the route. I try to greet them as soon as I see them, and keep abreast of their personal situations such as illness, a death in the family, or some special honor.

I find a special joy in the grade-school children walking a block or so with me on their way home from school. They share their joys and sorrows of the day and also take a special interest in what I'm doing. In essence, these children are my adopted ones, since I have none of my own.

I have been a regular on my particular route for eight years now. This has led to much deeper relationships with the people I serve. They remind me so very often of God's love. One hot August day a few years ago I saw a car stop in the middle of the street. I thought maybe the driver had car trouble. No, it was someone on my route. She was traveling home from the grocery store and just stopped in the middle of the street to give me a popsicle.

Another hot day I was working the block around the town swimming pool. I heard someone calling me. When I turned around I saw a friend's two-year-old trying to pass me a

EDITOR'S NOTE: In July, *Commonweal* began a series in anticipation of this month's synod on the laity in Rome. We asked a number of lay people to reflect on how their Catholic faith is lived out daily in the workplace and at home. What ethical and spiritual touchstones nourish and assist them? Our contributor in this final installment is Rose Mary Hart, an employee for the U.S. Postal Service, and a board member of the National Center for the Laity.

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half-melted ice cream bar and a glass of pop through the fence. This act of kindness became a weekly treat for both of us.

Even on the coldest days God has manifested his love for me through a note in a mail box here or there which asks me to ring the door bell. My first thought is that someone has a question about mailing a letter. But often I find someone taking a hot chocolate or tea from the microwave, just for me.

The Lord also provides many opportunities for evangelization. Many of my patrons live alone. Most of these are elderly. As a letter carrier I may be the only person someone will see on a daily basis. This is where punctuality is so crucial. So, too, is the greeting I have for these people. In just the few short seconds that I have with someone I need to try to hear what they are saying and respond in love and faith. At times my best and only response may be to offer to pray for them. Sometimes I can hear the family chaos through the closed doors of a house. Then, too, a prayer is needed on the spot.

Prayer can't stop there though. Prayer is necessary at the beginning of the day to put things in the proper perspective. It is a total surrender to God's will for me. It is necessary throughout the day as well, in asking for help in dealing with situations or people, in praise of creation, and in thanksgiving for opportunities to share Jesus' message by being who I am, and where I am. Prayer must continue at home after work also. It is there the Holy Spirit may direct me to further action on behalf of someone I met during the day.

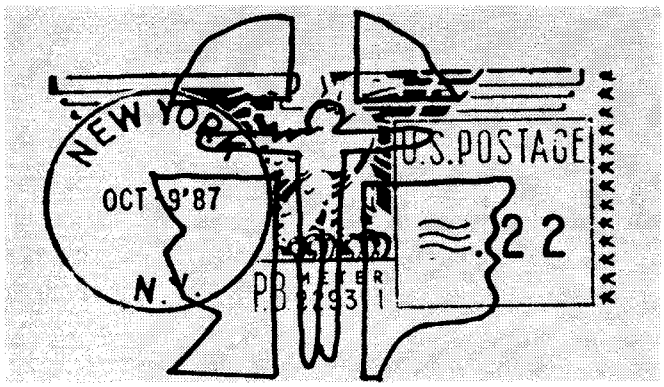
As my life with the Lord deepened, I often wondered how I could receive Jesus daily in the Eucharist. I used to feel disappointed that there were no parishes locally that offered Mass at a time that didn't conflict with my schedule, except during Lent. Now I realize that I do receive Jesus through the day's people and events. In this way I share a communion with my brothers and sisters. This is a strong source of hope and strength. Even though life can seem lonely at times, especially when faced with taking a moral stand, Jesus is with me and present in the others I'm dealing with.

This helps me to look beyond the people I may disagree with when decisions are made which affect my job as a letter carrier. My faith helps me in dealing with issues such as productivity, employee working conditions, and customer service.

The more I reflect on the Gospel and current church documents, such as the economics pastoral, the more I feel that I can no longer remain a bystander to certain directives from management, whether local or national. At times, some of those directives seem to be self-destructive even for management.

In heeding this sense of a call to action, I sometimes feel as if I am standing all alone. Others may complain about the problems off the clock, but don't take a stand officially for fear of future harassment. This is especially true for part-time employees who need all the hours of work they can get. Yet, someone must be willing to speak up, regardless of the cost. Otherwise, the problems will only get worse.

At this time I have two options for action. One is to prepare for a future managerial position through correspondence



courses into an area with broader consequences in the future. The other is to continue to serve on the Employee Involvement/Quality Work Life committees of which I am presently a member.

Many of the employees I work with share the Catholic faith. All are concerned with justice and doing the best job we can. These men have a special way of encouraging me, at least in private, when I speak out. They are also an important instrument God uses to call me back in line when I stray for some reason. A good case in point is the recent irritability I suffered through (or maybe they suffered through) as the result of an overburdened work load. They jokingly asked if I was going to the parish communal penance service that week. Their joking was an example of how they respect my faith and convictions.

Our office is staffed by a relatively small group; we number only seven. Relationships and friendships seem to be deeper than those of larger offices. We had a family picnic one year and a mixed bowling team. This year we got around to making a trip to a major league baseball game. These actions allow us to put aside work tensions and see a different side of one another. Some of us meet on certain days to share lunch, faith, family concerns, and hope for the future.

One of my coworkers has just started praying with a group of friends in his home town. He knows that I still pray with the Charismatic prayer group. As we share experiences of our prayer while casing our routes we nurture each other as well as witness to a third employee who is looking for a church community. As I continue to reflect on my career as a letter carrier — its joys, sufferings, challenges, and dreams — I realize the power and presence of God guiding my way.

There is an inscription on the old Washington D.C. post office which does very well in summarizing how I see myself in this ministry.

Messengers of Sympathy and Love
Servant of Parted Friends
Consoler of the Lonely
Bond of the Scattered Family
Enlarger of the Common Life
Carrier of News and Knowledge
Instrument of Trade and Industry
Promoter of Mutual Acquaintance
Of Peace and Goodwill among Men (People) and Nations.

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COUNSELS FOR THE BAPTIZED

POVERTY, CHASTITY, & OBEDIENCE TODAY

HUNTER BROWN

A church which used to talk a great deal about heaven now talks a great deal about "the world." From the Christian base communities in Latin America, to the economic pastorals of the Canadian and U.S. bishops, to the "people power" of the Philippines and the sanctuary offered demonstrators at Seoul's Myongdond cathedral, recent events reflect a church deeply immersed in the sufferings and joys of these distinctive times. It is against this background that the extraordinary synod on the laity will take place later this month.

It is important to recognize that the church's increased level of involvement in the world since Vatican II rests on a significantly different set of assumptions from those which underlie the worldliness of modern culture. In fact, it is precisely the distinctive vantage point of the church that allows it, and especially its lay members, to address the world's historical situation with a unique voice.

One of the pitfalls lying before the coming synod is the ease with which the importance of this unique vantage point can be obscured by a preoccupation with how the laity should behave. The first thing which ought to be said about the synod, then, concerns what it should not attempt: its business is not to seek a clearer outline of what the laity should *do*, however tempting it is to move in that direction. Catholicism seems to have a peculiar penchant for turning potentially worthwhile debates into discussions about itself as an institution: Who has which ministries *in* the church? To what degree can hierarchical prerogative be shared by the lay person? Who is stepping on whose toes? Etc., etc.

An aggressive lay leadership which reads into the lay renewal *its* preoccupation with its own place, vis à vis the hierarchy in the running of the church, risks falling far short of the needs of the hour. Its temptation is to do the same thing it has criticized religious and celibates for having done in the past: imposing a self-interested agenda on everyone else — in this case, on the rest of the laity.

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The reality of most lay lives is not reflected in the activities of those who have a church career or are even directly involved in ecclesiastical work. The reality of most lay lives is characterized, rather, by the altogether consuming business of trying to get and keep a job, pay the bills, sit up with sick children, battle with leaky pipes, and generally keep body and soul together. After being up all night with a sick child followed by a ten-hour shift in a mine, who cares about the rights and powers of lay ministries in relation to those of the hierarchy? The reality of most lay lives is not a church career or direct ecclesiastical work, nor even any desire for these, but is the more elusive and difficult matter of figuring out how their many commitments can be in some way suffused with a quality which would give them a character different from what they otherwise might have. The issue is not how to *add* something more.

The laity does not need a more detailed apostolic blueprint. What we could use is assistance in functioning better without any blueprint at all. It is, in other words, a matter of spirituality. A critical look at such a spirituality should, therefore, have an important place on the synod's agenda.

The first step is to recognize that Christian spirituality, however perennial its basic features, has to be lived out under concrete circumstances which give it a particular shape and a particular character in different generations. The distinguishing characteristic of the contemporary period is the emergence of a greater appreciation of the sacramental value of "this" world. What exactly is it that allows for contact with *this world*, however? What enables one to live in the present rather than in an imagined future? What exactly is "this-worldliness"?

These questions are rarely asked, probably because an answer is assumed. The assumption is that what puts one in contact with this world is the *concrete* encounter with it, whether intellectually through the social sciences or politically. One constantly finds a basic cultural commitment to the primacy of empirical evidence yielding truths which can be secured by the sheer weight of publicly verifiable data.

Questions about what these data *mean* — or what they are worth — are left up to the individual to decide privately. The

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flip side of the empiricist coin is the privatization (and relativization) of value and meaning. The exclusion of such matters from the mainstream of the human pursuit of knowledge and truth strips them of their traditional urgency. If "what is true for you is true; what is true for me is true," then debate is superfluous. As a colleague put it recently: "Nobody loses sleep over the question of God anymore."

These developments have had major consequences for the church. First, the church has been more and more forced to take a back seat to the empirical sciences' quest for understanding. Second, it has been increasingly called upon to shove over and make more room on that back seat. Christianity is expected to take its place alongside many other possible conceptual alternatives. A Christian understanding of the nature and meaning of the world is but an equal among a wide variety of possible worldviews. It has been largely relativized. Our culture's "this-worldliness" assumes scientific "neutrality" — that it is possible to put aside the values and meanings which are necessary in order to *live* in the world in such a way that they will have no effect on the ability to *know* the world.

Together, these developments have given a distinctive character to the laity's present situation. On the one hand, the apostolate of the laity — understood by the church in terms of bringing the Christian vision of meaning and value to human society — has acquired a much greater urgency in view of the intellectual, technological, and social developments at work today. On the other hand, such urgency has run headlong into a cultural attitude which has so relativized the Christian message that the layperson feels dutybound to remain neutral (even about religion).

There is a very ancient strand of Christian thought, exemplified particularly by St. Augustine, which stands in direct opposition to the cultural assumptions which demand such neutrality. For Augustine, the world can only be known as it truly is when it is known as ordered to God. In other words, contact with *this* world is a function of religious faith, an effort that has traditionally involved a certain amount of asceticism. The basic characteristic of the church's "this-worldliness" is detachment, which aims at freeing the truth about the world from subservience to human self-interest. This distinguishes it from the cultural "this-worldliness" of intellectual and moral *neutrality*. The church insists that individual self-interest does effect intellectual life — that we both see and act upon the world in accord not necessarily with what the world itself is but in accord with what we want it to be, given our own individual interests. This distinction between ascetical detachment and intellectual and moral neutrality is at the heart of the matter concerning the laity.

It is important for the church to establish the distinctive character of its "this-worldliness" more clearly. The church's "this-worldliness" is built upon the willingness to allow the revelatory event of Jesus of Nazareth to destroy conventional and usually self-serving assumptions about what (and who) is important, good, holy, powerful, meaningful, and even true. Such a willingness makes possible a fundamentally different experience of the world which allows one to *see* it differently, to see not just the world of one's own preference but God's world. The willingness to allow Christ's life to shape experience, however, requires the additional willingness to set aside the private interest which will be jeopardized by such an understanding; it is a matter of asceticism, of detachment: a detachment aimed not at escaping the world but at affording access to it, to *being with* the world rather than just using it.

An examination of this ideal of detachment clarifies the close connection between so-called "traditional" spirituality and the church's new sense of "this-worldliness." Until very recently, the spiritual ideal of detachment and devotion was represented for the lay person by the priest, the monk, and the religious. These vocations were given their character, above all, by their avowal of the evangelical counsels — poverty, chastity, and obedience. Understanding the roots and historical practice of these counsels is fundamental to overcoming the dichotomy of "other-worldliness" and "this-worldliness" in Christian history.

The great sign of detachment from the world and devotion to God in the primitive church was martyrdom. When the legalization of Christianity put an end to martyrdom, monasticism, which had been developing since the third century, filled the vacuum. Monasticism's concrete, physical abandonment of normal life — with its attendant commercial, sexual, and domestic dimensions — became a powerful symbol of Christian commitment. It was a symbol, however, which relied upon certain Platonic assumptions about the necessity of looking beyond this transient, material world in pursuit of union with an impassible God lying outside change and history. The counsels, as habits of life, also became an inherent part of clerical existence, especially in view of the latter's sacerdotal association with sacred objects. The counsels still carry such associations from the past, suggesting separateness, not only ministerial and sacerdotal, but also spiritual.

Such an understanding of the counsels, however, does not do justice either to them or to the church as a whole. The evangelical counsels should be considered under two aspects. On the one hand, they represent an espousal of certain values by an individual who has felt called to them by God and has responded by adopting a specific way of life. As such, humanly speaking, the hardship and attendant credit is owing to such individuals and throws light back on them and their efforts. On the other hand, and this is the crucial point, the evangelical counsels do not pertain solely to the individuals who choose them as a way of life. In the most basic sense, they belong *to the whole church* because they are symbols of the whole church's call to sexual and material restraint and obedience to the Gospel. It is this symbolic aspect of the counsels which needs to be brought into much greater prominence today as a means of promoting the laity's as well as the clergy's proper collective self-understanding.

Roman Catholicism, throughout its history, has had a perennial commitment to symbolizing publicly — to incarnating — the values it embraces within itself in a more hidden way.

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The traditional tendency for the symbolic force of the evangelical counsels to be represented exclusively by the religious who live according to them is, however, an unwarranted limitation of the counsels' full ecclesiastical significance. It arbitrarily circumscribes the full exercise of the counsels as symbols of what the life of every baptized person is supposed to involve.

There corresponds to the public nature of the commitment of religious, the hidden nature of much lay life. Most of the efforts of lay people to maintain a Christian character in the material, sexual, and other dimensions of life go unseen. Such hiddenness is related to the fact that obedience to the Gospel takes on a vast number of different forms, far beyond the simple absence of formal ownership and of physical sexual relations. Christian poverty, chastity, and obedience are elusive realities. They are capable of occurring under an extraordinary number of different conditions. A reduction to only certain life states causes a disenfranchisement of the laity and the form that such virtues take in their lives. When members of the laity sometimes seek to live the counsels more publicly — the same counsels which are socially applauded with respect to religious — they are often regarded as fanatics, within as well as outside the church, derided for their efforts and summarily marginalized.

A stronger emphasis upon the symbolic character of the counsels can bring into greater prominence the church's unique understanding of "this-worldliness" and its direct relation to spiritual detachment. The church's way of being "present to the world" is built upon the ascetical control of self-interest in the cause of making one's own the Gospel and the experience of the world which the Gospel allows. The laity and their spirituality ought to be characterized by this Christian understanding of "this-worldliness."

What is needed is a shift in the popular understanding of the evangelical counsels, one that moves away from the traditional and almost exclusive association with world-abandonment and separateness from all things secular, and moves towards a recognition of the fundamental *unity* between the religious and the lay vocations. The poverty of religious is not just their personal poverty but the church's; their chastity and obedience are, likewise, not just theirs but the whole church's.

This shift may make some lay people uncomfortable. Lay passivity has for centuries relied heavily upon the stereotype that those in counsels have been called by God to *satisfy* the rigors of the Gospel on behalf of the rest of the community who cannot rise to such demands (and so need not seek what is beyond them). Emphasizing more clearly the *universal* call (to the evangelical virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience) would be a significant force in communicating to the laity their binding obligation to realize such virtues in their own way. Some religious might balk at an approach which seems to undermine the status of their calling. My proposal is not meant to undermine the significance of religious life, but to call attention to that state's role in representing the toil of an incalculable lay effort hidden in offices, factories, hospitals, and homes, etc. The counsels, in the end, can give a public focus to a Christian ascetical "this-worldliness," quite at odds with our culture's empirically dominated and self-centered "this-worldliness."

What does all this entail concretely? To begin with, that all the baptized are bound by an obligation to take responsibility for interpreting their particular circumstances according to faith, and not to material, sexual, and individual self-interest. Theologically and sacramentally such a perspective is already concretely present in Vatican II's emphasis on the universality of the call to sanctity and also in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, which stresses the responsibilities incumbent upon all the baptized.

Poverty, chastity, and obedience are the flip side of the coin of money, sex, and power, the three principal means by which we try to force the world to center upon ourselves. So varied and so subtle is such manipulation that the corresponding virtues must be afforded considerable flexibility if they are to flourish. What is required is not a clearer definition of the virtues in terms of an enlarged but still precisely defined repertoire of behavior, but the ability and willingness to see beyond the basic to what more may be involved in a particular situation. Spirituality is a matter of learning (or being willing) to *see*. Too close an association between the virtues and specific behavior impairs this capacity by fostering the impression that, having fulfilled the minimal requirements, one is relieved of further responsibility. The result is the end of discernment.

For example, until recently, poverty, chastity, and obedience tended to be identified almost completely with a relatively narrow range of behavior. Chastity meant keeping your hands from, if not your mind off, the body of someone to whom you were not married; obedience meant submission to church authority; poverty meant financial contribution. There is nothing wrong with associating certain kinds of behavior with such virtues. Poverty does involve church support; chastity does involve physical self-control; obedience does involve respect (of mind and will) for church teaching. But it is wrong to reduce virtue to particular behaviors. To what extent, for example, can an exclusive association of the material implications of the Gospel with church support conceal the materialism of our culture or the susceptibility of all possessions to being means of establishing superiority over the people and functional independence from God? To what extent does a similarly narrow view of chastity as focused upon physical sexuality conceal the tendency to exploit the sex of another to gain influence over their personality, expectations, and will? And to what extent has the traditional association of obedience with ecclesiastical conformity obscured the call to respond to the will of God in all situations, not just those about which the church authorities have spoken specifically?

It is important to emphasize that none of the foregoing is calling the lay person to "become a Trappist-Cistercian monk while living in the world," as Dom Aelred Graham caricatured

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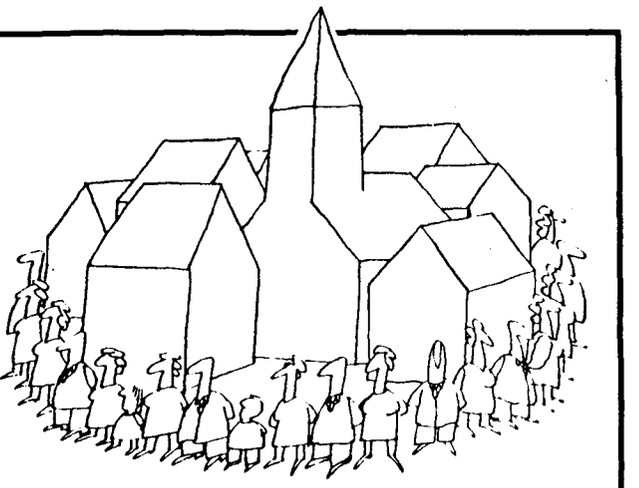
the young Thomas Merton's message many years ago. What is being said is that the vows of religious are *one* of many forms that the evangelical repudiation of the dominance of money, sex, and power can take. For laity there are other forms. Take family life. The willingness of parents to accept decades of constant interruption and demand entails the surrender of a good deal of self-will. The refusal to shirk such demands by forcing them onto one's spouse, on sexual grounds, manifests one form of chastity's willingness to forego the advantages which the exploitation of another's sex may still afford. Materially, family life is largely a surrendering of individual private property. The vast majority of dollars realized by the labors of family members are spent on objects which are possessed and used in common. In short, there is pervasive in family life the call to the subjugation of self-will, the sharing of resources, and sexual integrity. There are a great many laity who are becoming very tired of being told, directly or indirectly, that these are not only different forms of the virtues represented by the evangelical counsels but that they are second-class forms as well. Family circumstances — like all other kinds of circumstances in all other vocations — need not necessarily occasion a response of evangelical integrity. When they do, however, they show that the family is included in the symbolic meaning of the evangelical counsels.

To be more specific than this is to move from theory to story. Only the stories of particular lives can do justice to the diversity of concrete forms that the virtues can take, which is what the church's sanctoral cycle is all about.

As the synod on the laity approaches, it seems worthwhile to concentrate upon a spirituality capable of shaping the lay agenda — and of articulating a sense of what is needed given the incalculably diverse array of situations in which the laity find themselves. The attentive layperson today finds him or herself called to bring the church to a world which is increasingly uninterested in the church. Perhaps the business of the layperson ought to be to expose the limitations of the culture's view of the world. For all this generation's disinterest in the church, it is intensely interested in the world and how human beings can live together in it. It is also a generation with a keen nose for duplicity and ideology. It will judge the world which the Christian claims to have discovered in Christ on the basis of how that Christian lives. How Christians live in today's unfathomably complex world remains a matter of the ability to *see* the world in such a way that one can live peacefully *with it* even while trying to make it a more just place.

Perhaps the distinctive apostolate which the laity will be called upon to exercise in the last years of the twentieth century will consist not so much in possessing a ready arsenal of explanations to appease a bewildered world already drowning in explanations, nor more formal programs and activities. The lay apostolate may be the capacity to see in the world more than just a reflection of individual interests; the ability to repose in the mystery of the world; to "be with" another in a society increasingly committed to manipulation. The evangelical counsels are capable of symbolically embodying this apostolate for the laity.



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THE EMPIRE'S LAST NERVOUS TWITCH

THATCHER & 'THE LAND OF AMBUSH'

CUTHBERT CARSON MANN

The land of scholars and saints:
Scholars and saints my eye, the land of ambush,
Purblind manifestoes, never-ending complaints,
The born martyr and the gallant ninny;
The grocer drunk with the drum,
The landowner shot in his bed, the angry voices
Piercing the broken fanlight in the slum . . .

Louis MacNiece's *Autumn Journal* (1938)

During the past two decades of Northern Ireland's strife Ulster poet MacNiece's "land of ambush" has come perilously close to a bloody civil war. Martyrs have been scarce but there's a surfeit of ninnies as Catholics and Protestants purge their tribal hatreds.

Young women have been bound to posts, tarred and feathered, and had their hair shorn for fraternizing with British soldiers; innocent shoppers have been maimed or blown to smithereens by bombs; an elderly couple quietly sipping beer in a pub have been unaware that an explosive will make it their last drink; husbands have been shot in front of their wives; fathers within sight of their children; and young British soldiers, drawn from the ranks of the poorly educated and unemployed, have been sacrificed in a cause whose complexities they never understood.

The death toll is now more than 2,500, and in the volatile atmosphere that this represents it is risky to make predictions of any kind since belligerents on both sides have become experts at peacebreaking. Yet the smoke from bombs and tear gas cannot obscure some dramatic changes that could eventually lead to peace.

Not the least of these is the Anglo-Irish agreement negotiated by Margaret Thatcher nearly two years ago. And now that she has been reelected to a third five-year term as Britain's prime minister, and barring some unforeseen blunder that could topple her government, it's likely she will assiduously work to see that the agreement is carried out.

She will be aided in her efforts by conditions that make the prospects for peace, however dim, better perhaps than they have been in the sixty-six years that Ireland has been partitioned. The Irish Republican Army (IRA), for one, has suffered some staggering setbacks, and Ulster's (Protestant) Unionists have been effectively stripped of the power that for more than fifty years allowed them to maintain their own repulsive brand of apartheid. And while the Anglo-Irish agreement is partly responsible for some changes, it is what the agreement still promises to accomplish that may hold the ultimate key to tranquillity.

Thatcher has made it clear that the agreement, allowing the Irish Republic an unprecedented role in Ulster's affairs, was entered into "to defeat men of violence and to bring peace and stability (to Ireland)." And it is generally acknowledged in Britain that, in addition to having already firmly established a place in history, Thatcher would greatly augment her historical status if she could but solve the "Irish problem" that even the great Gladstone first attempted, but failed to do, at the turn of the century.

Her resolve to achieve what Gladstone and others couldn't, was reinforced a few years ago by an IRA attempt on her life, but apparently was first stimulated by her revulsion eight years ago at the IRA assassinations of the queen's cousin and World War II hero, Earl Mountbatten, three members of his family, and eighteen British soldiers; all in the same day. Immediately after Mountbatten's London funeral, Thatcher met with the Irish prime minister Jack Lynch to discuss ways of ending Irish violence, and this led to further Anglo-Irish talks. And these, ironically, were held within the framework of initiatives set in motion by Prime Minister Edward Heath, whom Thatcher defeated for the Conservative party leadership. Heath's efforts also made him the target of an IRA assassination attempt.

Spurred by mounting IRA and Protestant violence, the talks ultimately led to the agreement that Thatcher and Lynch's successor, Garret FitzGerald, signed in November 1985. It established the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference on Ulster's political, security, judicial, and economic affairs, and served notice on Protestant and IRA terrorists that neither the British nor the Republic's government would allow Ireland, north or south, to be held hostage to the gun. Consequently, Ulster's Catholic minority would be made secure from militant Protestant oppression, and Ulster, in turn, would be protected from IRA terrorism.

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But even before the Anglo-Irish accord, some important steps had been taken to assuage Catholic fears. In addition to reforms in housing, employment, and election laws, the notorious and predominantly Protestant B Specials, an auxiliary branch of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (police force) had been disbanded, and after successive failures to create a workable provincial government of Catholic and Protestant representatives, Westminister resumed the full control of Ulster that circumstances had first compelled it to assume in 1972.

As it now stands, the British Army and the RUC are charged with maintaining peace between the warring sides. And in recent months this test of army and police impartiality has proved successful as evidenced by attacks both have suffered from Protestant as well as IRA terrorists.

Indeed, the resurgence of IRA violence in 1969, after a seven-year hiatus, was made by the blatant bias shown by police against Catholics taking part in the then newly-formed civil rights movement. In some instances, the police stood by and did nothing or actively joined with Protestant hotheads in attacking Catholics, and they also brutally assaulted Catholics in Derry's Bogside. Consequently, the IRA was able to pose itself as the protector of the Catholic minority. But under the new dispensation inaugurated by the Anglo-Irish accord, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the IRA to maintain its protective role.

In addition, Thatcher is committed to establishing mixed courts comprising judges from Ulster and the Republic. These will provide the back-up for closer cooperation between police forces on both sides of the border. They will also go a long way towards removing one of the touchiest of Catholic grievances: the so-called Diplock courts that mandate trial by judge, instead of jury, ostensibly because of IRA intimidation of jurors. A recent decision, however, already has modified this policy so that jury trials can be allowed in cases involving firearms and kidnapping but not where terrorist crime is involved.

With about only 500 members who work full-time with the gun and the bomb, IRA leaders are acutely aware of the threat to their activities from Thatcher's determined policies. They remember that in 1956, after a period of dormancy, their renewed violence was effectively ended by 1962 through Anglo-Irish cooperation, and they're aware that the new accord goes far beyond that. They also realize that the same lady who moved the British fleet thousands of miles across the broad Atlantic to win the Falkland Islands war will not be easily deterred by small bands of outlaws across the narrow Irish Sea.

The IRA's bombing attempt on Thatcher's life during the Conservative party conference in 1984 is one measure of IRA concern. Another is its response to the Anglo-Irish accord which has been marked by stepped-up attacks against Ulster's police and judiciary. This resulted initially in the murder of the second highest ranking judge and the execution of nine police officers — acts that appear to be part of an IRA strategy aimed at sabotaging the Thatcher-initiated accord. By goading Ulster's almost exclusively Protestant law enforcement establishment into reverting to anti-Catholic behavior, the IRA could then restore its slightly diminished role as Catholic defender. (The lack of Catholics among the police and judiciary is now largely a result of the fact that Catholics who join them are almost certain to become targets for IRA assassinations.)

A severe setback to the IRA's strategy came in May, however, when eight of its senior activists, including two regional commanders, were killed in an ambush while bombing a police barracks about thirty miles southwest of Belfast. The IRA Provisional wing carried out the attack and later acknowledged that it was a staggering loss. It was made even more so by virtue of the IRA's small size, and the fact that in addition to the Official (Marxist) and Provisional (national socialist) main factions, it is further split into the Irish National Liberation Army (hardline Marxist) and Republican Sinn Fein (hardline national socialist). By far the most active are the Officials and Provisionals, and since 1969 each has had a legal Sinn Fein political organization headquartered in Dublin. The Officials are at Gardner Street and the Provisionals are based at Kevin Street.

There are indications that the police ambush, considered the IRA's worst defeat, may have been made possible by information obtained by British and Ulster authorities from Republic

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intelligence sources as part of the new Anglo-Irish cooperation.

IRA activities have been further complicated by these other developments:

- The Irish Navy's interdiction two years ago of a trawler loaded with a year's supply of arms for the outlawed organization.
- The U.S. Senate's ratification of a treaty last year making it easier for Britain to extradite wanted IRA terrorists from the U.S. (One terrorist accused of murdering a London policeman already has been extradited.)
- The U.S. Justice Department's requirement that Noraid, the Irish Northern Aid Committee, register as the American lobbying and fund-raising arm of the IRA and to file financial statements to comply with the Foreign Agents Registration Act.
- The Roman Catholic hierarchy's persistent condemnation of terrorism, which was also denounced by the pope during his 1979 visit.
- Significant voting gains last year by the moderate and Catholic-based Social Democratic and Labor Party in by-elections for fifteen of the seventeen seats that Ulster holds in the British Parliament, and losses by Sinn Fein. The Unionists, who stand for continued union with Britain, even lost one seat to the SDLP.

It is likely that these, and other, developments caused the Sinn Fein to abandon its sixty-six-year-old policy of abstaining from participation in the Dail, the Republic's parliament. Historically, the IRA has taken the stance that the Dail is illegitimate since it represents only twenty-six out of Ireland's thirty-two counties. Now Sinn Fein members can run for parliamentary seats while their outlawed military groups (the Official and Provisional IRAs) continue fighting in what constitutes a surely singular Irish combination of ballots, bullets, and bombs.

Sinn Fein's decision was not without cost, however, since about thirty of its members walked out and formed their own Republican Sinn Fein, obstinately holding out for the hoped-for day of Irish unification under a national-socialist state. The Official (Marxist) IRA is purportedly fighting a *social* revolution to remove the Irish Republic's government and British rule in the north on the grounds that both governments are capitalistic. But apart from some peaceful social protests in the 1960s, the Officials have almost solely concentrated their activities in the north, and neither of the two main IRA factions has ever spelled out the kind of social programs they would carry out if ever they succeeded in what, at the moment, seems to be their obsessive aim to get rid of the British presence in Ulster. Some Irish believe that if the Marxists triumphed, Ireland would become a Cuban-type state, unsweetened by sugar, or a fascist-type dictatorship, embellished with blood-and-soil rhetoric and Celtic mysticism, if the rightists succeeded.

Meanwhile Ulster's militant Unionists, who have fielded their own paramilitary organizations, including the Ulster Defense Association, are undergoing a trauma as great as that of 1914 when Britain seemed on the verge of granting home rule to an Ireland in which they would supplant the Catholics as the minority population.

In overwhelming numbers, Ulster's Protestants had then signed the Solemn League and Covenant that vowed to use "all means necessary to defeat home rule." To back it up they formed the Ulster Volunteers, an army of nearly 100,000 men. And they received welcome support from the British Army high command. From its Curragh headquarters in Dublin, the army made it clear that it would not enforce an Irish home rule that excluded Ulster from the United Kingdom.

Under the circumstances, the British government backed down and modified home rule in a way that partitioned Ireland into north and south. Partition became effective in 1921 under the Anglo-Irish Treaty that also called for the setting up of a never implemented boundary commission. This was to have worked towards eventual Irish unity or at least to further constrict Ulster to counties with Protestant majorities while transferring predominantly Catholic counties to the Republic (then known as the Irish Free State).

Now, with a Gallup Poll showing only 26 percent of British voters in favor of keeping Ulster in the United Kingdom, there is little chance of Britain, and particularly a Thatcher Britain, allowing Ulster to remain a part of the U.K. on strictly Protestant-Unionist terms. And the chances of a British army mutiny, as was threatened in 1914, are less than nil.

Given several chances to share power with the Catholics they had so long subjugated, Ulster's Unionists are now undergoing the torments of an acute identity crisis. They would like to retain their British identity but their own actions have all but foreclosed that possibility, and they cannot identify themselves as Irish in terms of a united and predominantly Catholic Ireland.

The remaining possibility would be to identify themselves as Ulstermen under a state that would be independent of both Britain and the Republic. But this Rhodesian-type solution of going it alone would be a sure prescription for disaster in a country with no major natural resources and which historically has faced unemployment of chronic proportions. Such a state also would risk losing $2.5 billion in annual British subventions which, among other things, maintain social welfare pro-

"Your trouble is, you don't know how to be Irish in moderation."

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grams, including national health, on a level with those in England.

If, as Ulster's firebrand preacher-politician, the Reverend Ian Paisley, blusteringly threatens, Ulster were to opt for independence, it would gain little sympathy (except perhaps from South Africa), for world opinion these days tends to favor those who are fighting for long-denied human rights; not those who are frenetically holding on to redundant privileges.

Ireland's future difficulties, however, may ultimately depend, not on whatever actions Ulster's Unionists or the various IRA factions take, but on whether the Republic's government adheres to the Anglo-Irish agreement. Since Garret FitzGerald of the Fine Gael party signed the agreement, he has been succeeded to the premiership by Charles Haughey of the Fianna Fail party, and his leadership could swing government policies in a direction more to the liking of the men of violence.

Haughey (some Irish call him "haughty"), a multi-millionaire whose lifestyle and eighteenth-century mansion are suggestive of Louis Quatorze, is a bit of a maverick in Irish politics. He was acquitted in 1970 of charges that he and other members of Prime Minister Lynch's government had been involved in smuggling arms to the IRA in the north. (Haughey was finance minister at the time.) The trial had many of the aspects of the U.S. Iran-*contra* hearings.

From his past statements and actions it appears that, like some other members of his party, Haughey subscribes to democracy in public while retaining an emotional attachment to the violent efforts of the IRA (in his case the Provisionals) to bomb Ulster into Irish unity. And now that he's head of his party and the government, Haughey has vowed to renegotiate the Anglo-Irish agreement on the grounds that it violates the Republic's 1937 Constitution which claims title to all of Ireland. It's an odd position to take since any future unified Ireland presumably would have to question the validity of a constitution that was enacted without the consent of Ulster's 1.6 million inhabitants. It serves, nevertheless, as a quixotic symbol of the tragically held view by the IRA, and its supporters, that you can unite Ireland without first uniting the Irish.

Haughey also is likely to challenge the agreement's assurance that Ireland would not be united unless a majority in Ulster favor it. Elected, however, by a very slim margin, made possible by independent support, Haughey may delay carrying out his vow until his political position is stronger. If not, even so, he would find himself bargaining with Thatcher whom the Soviets have labeled (and they are certainly qualified to do so) the "iron lady."

And despite all the blather of politicians in the north and south, Ireland is bound to Britain by an economic umbilical cord which is one more reason in favor of Thatcher finding, for the Irish problem, a solution that evaded Gladstone and other more recent predecessors. If she succeeds, historians may yet record, as her greatest achievement, that she stilled that last nervous twitch of a once powerful empire.

SCREEN

KEEPING THINGS TAUT

'ATTRACTION' & 'TOUGH GUYS'

Fatal Attraction yields a dose of powerful terror. You leave laughing, not at any ineptitude, but, almost as after a fine Hitchcock film, with relief: you have survived. The last half hour particularly prompts both nervous laughter and anxious seat-gripping.

The plot relies on several clichés (including the now standard fake-ending), and there are credibility problems with some of the characters. But the film provides several extremely cold chills, and, from Glenn Close, one of the screen's most disturbing portrayals of mental illness in some time.

Close plays a New York editor who has a one-night stand with lawyer Michael Douglas, and then proceeds to try to wreck his life. He is married; she knows it; still, she lures him on; then blames him for ignoring her once he declares the affair at an end. Director Adrian Lyne veers toward cliché in having Close live in a Bohemian loft in a lower Manhattan meat-packing district. Douglas, by contrast, lives with his wife and child in the more domestic Upper West Side. Lyne also indulges in too many obligatory shots of rotating overhead fans, one of the sixteen-ton symbols of film noir that, roughly translated, means "watch out for knives."

But both director and female lead keep the material at a fresh enough angle to provide nuances. Indeed, the first shot of Close suggests why the film works: you see part of her at a party, at an angle in the distance, rather than a blunt, obvious full shot of her face. Lyne and screenwriter James Dearden are also subtle enough to allow for some naturalistic comedy, including a silly but convincing bout of lovemaking in a sink. What they and producers Stanley Jaffe and Sherry Lansing have created is the texture of real life that subsumes the sensationalism of the story and makes one forget to object to it. Lansing in particular has tried this before (in the 1984 *First Born*), but miscasting undid her (Teri Garr in an unapt melodramatic role). Here, with Close at the center, she has co-produced a film that redefines the term "domestic gothic."

Douglas's household also has real life solidity. He is not unhappy in marriage; wife Anne Archer is no movie mousy-spouse, but a sexy, tough-minded woman who gets to give a good fit when she finds out about the affair. One has to accept Douglas's infidelity as a callow, casual act; again, the film makes it easy by convincing us of everything else about his life (wife, child, and a golden Labrador whose tail comically hangs out their Volvo's door).

Close's character (as written) raises the greatest credibility problems: some may object that no one that gorgeous (or adult,

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or capable) could get so fixated or vengeful. As acted, Close's character is absorbing because of the fierce, wild anger she projects; because of her glamorous but witchlike looks; and because of her sick flicker of a smile at cruel moments. She had the preview audience squirming. Lyne tries to provide hints about why Close comes unhinged, but (wisely for this kind of film) evades a full explanation. Keeping things taut works well. It has been said that the best dramatic suspense involves not mystifying an audience, but telling what will happen while compelling the audience to watch nevertheless. At this, *Fatal Attraction* succeeds.

ough Guys Don't Dance is the *ne plus ultra* of Norman Mailer's degeneration. The film represents Mailer's second real attempt at directing (he shot the underground *Maidstone* in 1970). This film is better, and has some exaggeratedly offbeat moments as half-serious, half-spoofy film noir. But the film is a tangle of poses, manic black jokes, and nonstop foul language. Tough guys don't disdain only dancing, but manners.

Mailer reminds me of the lawyer in *All the President's Men* who kept saying to Robert Redford: "I just have nothing to say." The problem is, Mailer thinks he does. Mailer made his reputation with a fine combat novel. But the combination of that early success, later literary lionization, the shadow cast by Hemingway, and the cockiness perhaps linked to his Harvard degree seems to have stunted Mailer's growth as a writer. His evolution toward journalistic fiction has not served (in Carlyle's manner) to identify the timeless and universal in the everyday, but rather to mark his own superficial vision. After *The Naked and the Dead*, what will live on when all the hubbub subsides?

Of *Tough Guys*, Mailer has said, "I want my film to thrive in a no-man's land between a murder mystery, a suspense tale, a film of horror—and a comedy of manners. Life—in extreme situations—eludes categories. At extraordinary moments, we don't always know if we're in a tragedy or a farce." Such a declaration of independence from cliché sounds like one itself.

Worse, Mailer betrays his ends by his means, absurd categories of characterization concocted from Tennessee Williams, Hemingway, and cocaine. Ryan O'Neal plays a failed writer, an ex-football star at Exeter, now given to alcohol, drug deals, and equal doses of promiscuity and guilt. His ex-schoolboy pal, Wordleigh (John Bedford Lloyd) drawls out elegant cynicism and despair inbetween committing murders. The local police chief is a a former Green Beret, Vietnam vet, sadist, and machete freak who wants to be president. Throw in the brooding pre-Raphaelite beauty, dark-browed Isabella Rosellini (Ingrid Bergman's daughter) as an Italian American femme fatale, and two blowsy blondes (one a Southern witch) who get their heads cut off, and you get the range of Mailer's personae from Sociology 101. Pardon me if I categorize it as pathological, misogynistic, and plain stupid.

Odd aspects of the film redeem it slightly. The photography artfully exploits the Cape Cod landscape; for a while Mailer even creates a quiet tension between the prim houses and black doings on the bleach-blonde sands. Rosellini is lovely to watch, though perhaps this is just nostalgia. O'Neal's father (Lawrence Tierney) provides comic relief with deadpan delivery in his "tough guy" role; at least he manages to wink, which provides some ironic distance on the material. Mailer's attempt to evade categories is mirrored in his divided attention between Tierney and O'Neal. The problem is they seem like they're in different movies.

The best to be said for O'Neal is that here his studied underacting fits the permanent hangover of the character he plays. He also gets the worst line in any movie in 1987.

TOM O'BRIEN

Mike Carson

Holy Name School, 1951

Sister Paschaline smelled like old blankets,
black folds and sheets starched around her craggy face.
My father who never went to Mass called her
Sister Appalachia. She was six foot plus
and beat third graders like an avalanche.
Everybody cried at least once in her room.
And then she'd crack *where's your linen?*
and smack us *to the wastecan*
to blow our noses in the trash —
pencil shavings, snot and tears, and the weird
terror in liking to watch.
She was ninety-three, a nun before
electrcity, alive when Lincoln was
and looked like him without a beard more
than any man I'd seen. Mythical:
her bones so old she couldn't sit,
so our only view of her was up —
the long dark wool, the chain of beads —
to the face carved without a smile,
staring from a flat cloud,
rumbling, ready to bury us.
Like the big gold picture of God
tiled into the church ceiling that waited
to fall on my father if he ever went back.

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A marriage not in heaven made

CAESAR'S COIN
RELIGION AND POLITICS IN AMERICA
Richard P. McBrien
Macmillan, $19.95, 294 pp.

David O'Brien

Peter Maurin, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, spent a lifetime of non-stop agitation seeking "clarification of thought." One suspects that, despite reservations about Richard McBrien's brand of civil and ecclesiastical politics, Maurin would love the chairman of Notre Dame's theology department. McBrien is today's great Catholic clarifier. In his weekly column, his many books, most notably the encyclopedic *Catholicism,* and his occasional radio and television appearances, McBrien sorts out ideas, makes distinctions, specifies options; he makes theology sound sensible and the church appear an arena of reasonable discourse.

Richard McBrien addresses his new book "especially to those for whom devotion to 'the public good' is no idle pursuit." He begins by sorting out four levels of recent debate: morality and politics, religion and politics, specific religions and politics, and religious professionals and politics. He rejects the argument that morality and religion must always be connected; in fact "failure to perceive the difference between morality and religion is at the root of most of the confusion in debates about religion and politics in general, and about specific issues like abortion."

In the fashion of his most cherished mentor, John Courtney Murray, McBrien emphasizes the search for public moral consensus and predictably endorses Mario Cuomo's argument that government cannot act in the absence of such consensus. Still, when dealing with "the hardest issue," abortion, he asks whether the politician does not have a responsibility to help shape the consensus and exploit the degree of consensus which in fact exists. Drawing heavily on Murray's distinction between spiritual and temporal concerns, and his argument that the First Amendment constitutes an "article of peace," not a theological statement, McBrien carefully makes the case that the churches have the right to participate in public debate and to promote human rights, but primarily within society, as distinct from the state. From the theological side, no single approach to the church-state problem "can be canonized as the one, true Christian approach," but the entire book can be read as a statement of preference for the American arrangement.

McBrien then offers an extended examination of church and state in American history and law. Never short of energy, he has familiarized himself with the best political and constitutional scholarship and provides an excellent summary of the state of the questions on establishment and free exercise. He prefers the flexible Madisonian "line" to the impenetrable Jeffersonian wall. He hits the religious right with the above distinctions, but has no truck with absolute separationists. "Secularism and religious faith are antithetical," he argues, "but secularity and religious faith are entirely compatible." He then takes up abortion and several other disputed cases, emerging as a critical but committed defender of Cardinal Bernardin's "seamless garment" and the mainstream episcopal position (at the moment) that reasonable argument and civility are necessary instruments for influencing the public moral consensus.

The problems with McBrien's book are the problems of Murray and the tradition within which both men work. One is the heavy dependence upon the distinction between society and the state, the related distinction between "the common good of society, which all persons and communities are bound to pursue, and the narrower juridical notion of public order, which is the proper (and limited) concern of the state." The latter includes "public peace, which is the highest political good, public morality as determined by moral standards commonly accepted among the people, and justice, which secures for the people what is due them." In very American fashion McBrien adds that "the first thing due to the people, in justice, is their freedom, the proper enjoyment of their personal and social rights."

One wishes to ask Murray and McBrien: who says the highest good is peace? Who benefits and who loses from civility and "amity?" What matters besides explicit religious beliefs must be excluded to achieve these exalted aims? When the public morality is "pluralist" (Murray) it is understandable, of course, why the Founders and so many of their successors thought that the American experiment depended upon limited government. But when the federal budget determines many matters of economy, social welfare, even culture, it is naive to rest so heavy a weight on a supposedly autonomous "society."

For Murray, McBrien, the ethical realists, and even for the bishops in their pastoral letters, the abstract "state" is peopled with disinterested "decision-makers" carefully weighing options and factoring in ethical considerations filled with precise distinctions and cautious

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proportions. But the state is in fact the government as we know it, led by "the best and the brightest" in the sixties, then by the Watergate crowd, now by the people on today's television screen.

Lest this sound like neoconservatism, let us remember that the much vaunted "society" is filled with corporations, economic and otherwise, and with more than a few adventurers with great power and far less accountability than government. This is not to push for cynicism but for an old Jeffersonian idea that, lacking available angels, we had best govern ourselves, regard all power with the greatest possible suspicion, and be alert for categories of analysis which make unity and peace the highest political goods.

In Murray-like fashion McBrien appeals to experience to affirm the pragmatic, flexible approach to the various levels of the religion and politics debate. That experience has taught us that we can have "political unity and stability . . . without uniformity of religious belief" and that religious communities themselves benefit from separation. Experience has also demonstrated that "stable political unity can be strengthened by the exclusion of religious differences from affairs of state and government," thereby preventing the factionalism that so concerned the founders.

Perhaps.

But when "the state" decides to educate, make war, conduct foreign policy, or "develop" a neighborhood, one may wonder whether order and stability might be like that reconciliation which Saul Alinsky once defined as, "we have the power and you reconcile yourself to it." When large numbers of citizens have grown cynical and passive regarding political life, and powerlessness and consequent irresponsibility mark the public attitudes of many citizens who are not poor, our pragmatic and flexible political ethicians might ask whether we don't need more, not less, factionalism, more vigorous conspiracies, and a tad less civility.

No one who reads this book can come away without feeling great sympathy for the Mario Cuomos and Cardinal Bernardins of this world, contending with sectarians and secularists, with single-issue bishops, Christian America demagogues, an infinite multitude of contentious minorities. Friends of the public good, McBrien's intended audience, may constitute a band no larger than the subscription list of *Commonweal*. Why is it that reasonable persons can rally so little support? Perhaps because reasonable liberals see the motes in all eyes but their own, perhaps because their reasonableness, like the passions of others, can and does become ideology for interests, be they clerical or academic. Perhaps because liberals promote a public philosophy rather than a public theology, they deal in ethics rather than meaning. "Public religion," McBrien tells us, "refers to the ethico-religious value system of the nation" and thus the search to persuade Americans to recognize the imperatives of natural law; failing that, Catholic liberals settle for various forms of deterrence and "peace of a sort."

Civil religion, on the other hand, "refers to the ethico-religious value system that is centered on the nation itself." McBrien is skeptical about its prospects, but somehow this political theologian and those of us who share his very democratic love of politics and his very Catholic love for clarity need a touch of passion, a stronger love for the Republic and its people. To put it another way, Catholics who were once outsiders have become insiders; as immigrants and later as a Catholic minority, we wished to bring the best of our heritage to the service of the nation. Now, our bonds with one another are looser, more contractual, but our sense of oneness with our fellow Americans has not intensified.

No question is more important for Catholics than "who are our people?" No issue is more central to the public-church debate than whether or not Catholics can build bonds of community and fellowship with our fellow citizens, first of all in local communities. Only if we locate ourselves firmly and decisively there, in this community and this nation, will Catholic acceptance of the disciplines of pluralism and the conventions of civility contribute to the renewal of public life and public debate which the bishops and Father McBrien so earnestly pursue.

FIREWORKS HIDDEN & DEEP

SPIRITS AND OTHER STORIES
Richard Bausch
Simon and Schuster, $15.95, 237 pp.

Thomas Cahill

It is easy not to like these stories, to try to get away from them as quickly as possible. That is why, as I have read from one to another, I have tasted a sort of metallic panic, almost a despair. It is my deep, perverse suspicion that, when I am an old man, in the second and third decades of the twenty-first century, all of Bausch — this book, his three novels, anything he may write — will be in print, and names like Updike, Roth, Bellow will have faded from view. But how to capture Bausch for the reader? For though his fiction is indeed contemporary, it is in no way "of the moment." He rides no current, catches no wave.

First of all, there is his style. It seems almost not to be there. One word follows another plainly, ploddingly. They seem the inevitable words, serviceable, and nothing more. "About a month before Jean left him," begins the third story, "Casey dreamed he was sitting in the old Maverick with her and the two boys, Rodney and Michael." That's how all the sentences go, almost algebraically. No flash, no fireworks, nothing to admire — except, of course, the supreme artifice that so conceals itself. Sometimes the dialogue has a quiet crack to it. "I'll tell you," says one minor character. "It's a terrific misfortune to have to be raised by a human being." But the remark is so much in context, such a part of seamless whole, that the reader is well into the next paragraph before he realizes he's been hit, is bleeding from the abdomen.

Then there are Bausch's characters. They are the plainest people. They must

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usually ask themselves if they have enough change for two sundaes at K Mart. Since they are not good consumers, they do not allow us even that *frisson* of product recognition that has become such a staple of contemporary fiction. And they are so inadequate to their situations. They lead impossible, unsatisfactory lives. "What's happened to you? How could you wind up like this — how could you let it happen?" asks a sister of her brother in "Contrition." These are questions that could be put to all Bausch's characters.

In the first story ("All the Way in Flagstaff, Arizona"), a vagrant whose life has been ruined by drink stands shaking with the D.T.'s in a strange town that has no meaning for him, and recalls his beloved, lost family. In the second story ("Wise Men at Their End"), a gruff, graceless man must summon up his meager personal resources to meet his impending disintegration. In the third story ("Police Dreams"), a devoted husband and father who is completely in the dark about why his wife left him experiences recurrent nightmares in which he and his family are stalked by murderers. How could anyone take a steady diet of such people? Except that they are all nonentities, their sadnesses are like the griefs of ancient tragedy. *Sunt lacrymae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt* rises from Bausch's pages like incense.

But if his almost monosyllabic style fails to stir us to superlatives and his casts of characters set our teeth on edge, Bausch's plots are things to wonder at, for they draw us like magnets to a pole. It is virtually impossible not to finish a Bausch novel at one sitting, and of these stories it can be said that while you are in the midst of one you will not be able to answer a ringing telephone.

How does he do it? I don't know. All I can say is that he imagines so *completely*. You feel, reading these stories, that Bausch has imagined everything about these characters — the way they cried and held their bodies as infants, the way they hurt and admired themselves as adolescents, their secret yearnings, their middle-aged bowel movements, all their years and idiosyncracies, far beyond anything he sets on the page. ("I've had three husbands in my life and they all had things about them that you couldn't say was too normal," says the landlady in "Spirits," the title story. "Who doesn't? Who's normal in private?") He sees his characters so organically, so interrelatedly that everything has meaning, nothing is an accident. And yet this vision is so whole that no element ever clanks like a symbol in a surrealist painting. Rather, like the weather in *Lear* (and there is much weather in Bausch), you need not advert to the symbols. They are not stuck in; they are integral as a chordal progression in Josquin Desprez.

The only twentieth-century American writer to whom he may be valuably compared is Flannery O'Connor. Both are Georgians, Catholics, both think of life as a spiritual crisis. But Bausch is hopping with sex, *all* kinds of sex, all of it salvific — and a turn-on to the reader. Bausch's characters never illustrate a thesis. And though their lives are truly sad, God is never fierce with them — no fiercer, at least, than is absolutely necessary. At the end of *Real Presence*, Bausch's first novel, a man reaches into a fish tank to prod a lackadaisical fish. "Let's see. . . . If it's alive, and I irritate it enough, it'll move," says he. Bausch's God prods and irritates, but seldom traumatizes his creatures. (In one of these stories, "The Man Who Knew Belle Starr," Bausch deliberately provokes comparison with O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard to Find." In Bausch's story, as in O'Connor's, a person's whole psyche is rearranged when a gun is pointed at him and he knows he will be killed in minutes. But Bausch's message is not O'Connor's; in fact, he gives us no message, but leaves us to finish the story.)

I feel sure that Bausch's experience of sex led him, as it does all men who grow up, to his experience of fatherhood — and this fatherhood is the matrix of his stories. His constant theme is how much people really care for one another — beneath the monosyllabic surfaces and the apparent indifference — without their ever saying so, often without their knowing so themselves. Thus, his characters are usually husband-wife, parent-child, though they are sometimes strangers who (perhaps only momentarily) act these roles toward one another. In this caring lies the Real Presence — our meaning, the Father in our lives. In our not recognizing it lies our real tragedy.

MYSTERIES OF THE MADONNA

THE CULT OF THE VIRGIN MARY
PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIGINS
Michael P. Carroll
Princeton, $25, 253 pp.

Lawrence S. Cunningham

There has been a spate of recent books on the cult of the Virgin Mary in the Christian tradition inspired by an interest in feminism and a genuine concern for a better understanding of popular religion. This interest occurs at a time when the present pope not only exhibits a keen devotion to Mary but has formalized that devotion with well-publicized visits to the various shrines dedicated to Mary. It hardly needs to be added that the papal and scholarly agendas with respect to Mary are not always mutually supportive. In one sense, Pope John Paul's interest in Mary not only reflects his own spiritual formation but his particular response to the challenges of feminism.

Professor Carroll is not interested in the theological, historical, or cultural origins of the Marian cult of Christianity. He addresses the issue of the psychological impulses that led to the emergence of the Marian cult in the fifth century (this issue takes up the first half of his book)

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and the psychological background of those who were the recipients of Marian visions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed, one could say that in this volume there are two quite different issues being dealt with that despite the efforts of the author never quite link up into a coherent whole.

Part one of Carroll's study can be briefly stated: The explosion of the Marian cult in the fifth century occurred because of large numbers of converts to the church came from the lower classes who were "father ineffective." Such persons had a strong but repressed sexual attraction to their mothers and a compensatory desire to inflict pain on themselves. With that hypothesis in mind Carroll links together the emergence of the Mary cult (transferred from the older Cybele cult), the increased interest in the passion of Christ, and other signs of masochism such as the emergence of clerical celibacy as a general obligation on the clergy.

What is one to make of this hypothesis? Even if one were to grant legitimacy to the Freudian argument (something I am not prepared to do) such an explanation seems to me to be both reductionist and resting on an uncontextualized understanding of religious history. In the first place, Carroll is not quite correct to see the Marian cult as emerging full-blown only in the fifth century. If the researches of scholars like Raymond Brown (never cited in this book) have taught us anything it is that the Mary of the New Testament is less a historical personage than a highly theologized portrait of a person who is understood symbolically in the economy of salvation.

Furthermore, while it is true that devotion to Mary develops slowly in the pre-Constantinian church it is therein a form more fully realized than Carroll, relying mainly on the old work of Hilda Graef, would allow. Thirdly, his emphasis on the emergence of devotion to the passion of Christ (an example of religious masochism according to Carroll) in the fifth century is very much overstated. Such devotionalism does not really emerge until the Middle Ages.

Finally, in order to localize these "father ineffective" folks in Italy and Southern Spain Carroll must deny that Marian devotionalism is less intense in Orthodox circles. To which I would say: read a bit about Mount Athos where, in order to preserve "Mary's Garden" not even female animals were allowed.

The second half of Carroll's book is more interesting and less tendentious. He closely analyzes the reports of Marian apparitions like those at Lourdes, LaSallette, Fatima, Knock, and the Rue de Bac in Paris. He distinguishes between *illusions* (something was seen and then confused with a vision) and *hallucinations* (where something is thought to be seen and/or heard). By a close analysis of the sources he is able to show the role of suggestion in these visions, the interpolations added by those who were authority figures (e.g. parish priests), and the role of familiar religious art in giving shape to what was "seen."

I think it was George Carlin who once said that speaking to God is prayer but God speaking to us is schizophrenia. Carroll is at pains to show that a goodly number of the Marian seers were people who had experienced severe family deprivations or other forms of psychological trauma. With that there would be little quarrel. In fact, I would note that Virginia Leukens, the Bayside seer in New York, began to receive her visions shortly after her young son died. In short, it seems reasonable to look for some psychological predisposition in seers; such a search is almost connatural in our post-Freudian age and is one that church authorities themselves are not loath to employ — as church reactions to alleged visionaries and stigmatics attest.

Carroll, then, gives us some plausible hypotheses about the recipients of Marian apparitions in modern times. As such this adds to our understanding of the apparitions themselves and makes a significant contribution to a prominent part of modern popular Catholicism. What Carroll does not provide (and, in fairness, does not attempt to provide) is a fuller appreciation of why such apparitions should receive the attention they do and why they should continue to attract large numbers of people. For such social understanding we need to rely on such exemplary analyses as Alan Neame's *The Happening at Lourdes: The Sociology of the Grotto* (1967) and Edith and Victor Turner's brilliant anthropological study: *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978).

The really interesting thing about mariology today is that it provides an arena for quite different constituencies in modern Catholicism. For some liberation theologians, mariology provides an entry into the world of popular religion (a fact emphasized by Harvey Cox in his more recent work). For feminists, mariology is an example of how the church attempts to domesticate female power and sexuality. For conservative theologians, mariology is a way of establishing an orthodox christology. For the social critic, the interest in popular marian devotions is a form of resistance to the secularizing tendencies of the world. For many Catholics devotion to Mary is quite simply, a link back to the piety of an earlier Catholicism. Mariology and the cult of Mary, in short, is polyvalent and it is its very polyvalence that Carroll seems incapable of recognizing.

The greatest weakness of this study is that it attempts to wrestle the entire Marian phenomenon onto a procrustean bed of Freudian orthodoxy. The results are a mixed bag. Carroll comes to some genuine insights and to some silly conclusions (scapulars are wool in order to provide pain; as a onetime wearer I can attest that their greatest liability was that they smelled in the summer and did not enhance beach romances). That, on balance, tends to be the scorecard on most psychoanalytic studies on almost any topic one could imagine.

REVIEWERS

DAVID J. O'BRIEN's *latest book is* Faith and Friendship, *a history of the diocese of Syracuse, N.Y.* The Promised Land: Isaac Hecker and American Catholicism *is forthcoming.*

THOMAS CAHILL *is editor and publisher of the Cahill & Company's Readers' Catalogue and co-editor of* A Literary Guide to Ireland.

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM's *most recent book is* The Catholic Faith *(Paulist).*

TIMOTHY A. BYRNES *is currently writing a dissertation on the political activities of the American Catholic bishops.*

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IN BRIEF

SUFFICIENTLY RADICAL, *by Joseph McShane S.J., The Catholic University Press, $38.95, 319 pp.*

McShane's well-documented volume on the 1919 Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction should teach those who do not already know that application of Catholic social teaching to economic structures and decision making has a long tradition. In *Sufficiently Radical,* Father McShane details the American hierarchy's application of these teachings to the American context in 1919, nearly three-quarters of a century before the current debate over the bishops' pastoral letter on the economy got underway.

One wonders how many followers of that current debate realize that the hierarchy issued the following statement at the end of World War I:

> . . . the present system stands in grievous need of considerable modifications and improvement. Its main defects are three: enormous inefficiency and waste in the production and distribution of commodities; insufficient incomes for the great majority of wage earners; and unnecessarily large incomes for a small minority of privileged capitalists. . . .

Nor did the bishops content themselves with generalities in their program. Rather, they called for a series of specific reforms such as support for public housing, establishment of a minimum wage, and state provision of social insurance that in retrospect reads like a blueprint for FDR's New Deal of thirteen years later.

McShane's book is a historical work and deserves to be judged on its merits as such. It has two major strengths. First, the book highlights Msgr. John Ryan's role in the church's on-going efforts to come to terms with the American political, social, and economic environment. Second, this book appropriately places the Bishops' Program within the political context of its day. Throughout American Catholic history the hierarchy has often found itself caught between the competing pressures of Vatican policy and American political and social reality. McShane argues that through their adoption of Ryan's introduction of Leo XIII's social teaching to the American progressive movement, the bishops were able to realize their persistent goal of establishing the compatibility of Catholic teaching with the best of American values.

TIMOTHY A. BYRNES

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 546)

thors? Or because the conquered, manipulated women of such novels are eloquently shrouded in romantic fantasy? Perhaps a little of both. Greeley unmasks fantasy and boldly reveals the true nature of his characters. . . . Let's face it, Greeley writes about every human weakness and emotion. He unpeels the layers of ugliness of each of his characters to

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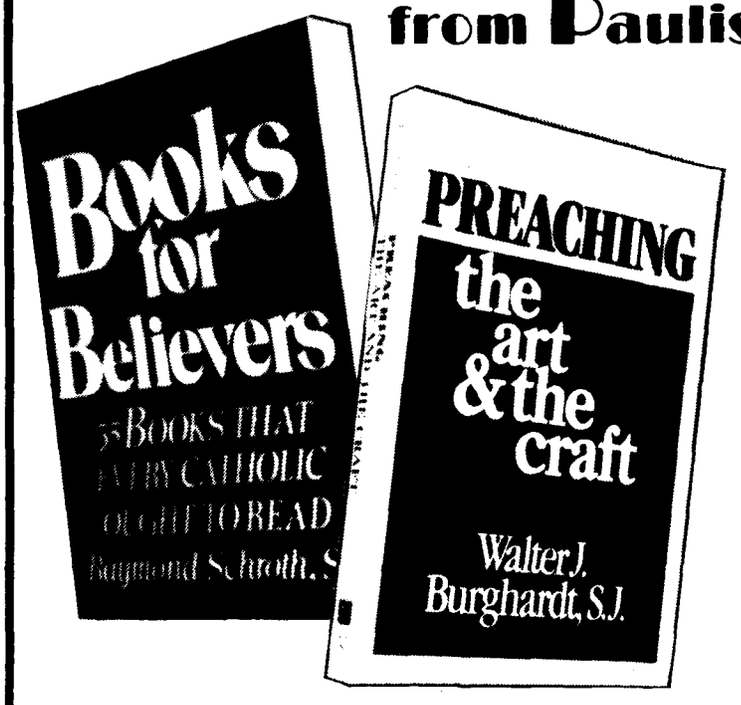

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reveal the beauty and truth hiding deep within them. Sometimes the truth isn't all that pretty and we prefer to avoid it. Unlike many typical steamy sweet novels, Greeley's characters do not go trailing off into the sunset happily ever after without trials and self-revelation of some kind. Life isn't so simple, and neither is Greeley's message.

LINDA MARAN

Beyond recognition

Cheyenne, Wyo.

To the Editors: Besides all the erudite objections that Mary Zeiss Stange has to Andrew Greeley's books ["Little Shop of Horrors," July 17], I would like to add the observation that none of his female characters read real . . . In *Lord of the Dance,* I didn't recognize any of the women as someone I might have *ever* known. Women do not "come alive" in his pages . . . .

MARGARET REED

Hitting a nerve

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: Oddly enough, Mary Zeiss Stange's lengthy diatribe on Andrew Greeley's "absolutely unconscionable" view of women and sexuality ["Little Shop of Horrors," July 17] gave me great insight into my own comfort with considering myself a staunch Greeley fan.

That many of Greeley's principal women characters are abused, battered, suffering victims of violence is probably true. While never a victim of physical violence, I can easily identify with his women characters, with their pain and their struggle to be "good" women. That easy identification must come only because I too am in pain and I too struggle mightily for maturity and goodness. In fact, that pain and that struggle comprise the chief elements of my own story — a story in which I am indeed my own subject; a story I am creating and telling daily, told from my own point of view. Can it be that the "immense popularity of Greeley's novels among a large female readership" — a fact Ms. Stange finds "disturbing" — stems from the ease with which other women identify with his characters as well? I suggest that Greeley has hit a nerve here.

Unlike Ms. Stange, I find it very easy to forgive Greeley what seems to be, in her estimation, his major fault — his point of view, his maleness. In exploring women's suffering (my suffering) from that point of view, he is providing a tremendous service — the enlightenment and instruction of many an insensitive man (and woman). For it is the view of women and sexuality held by far too many who are oblivious to, or only mildly sympathetic with the plight of women in our society and within the Catholic church especially, that I find "absolutely unconscionable." Greeley's almost obsessive treatment of the theme of women's suffering is filling a terrible void. He is indeed, "a voice crying out in the wilderness."

Finally, for those, like me, already aware of their pain and already engaged in the struggle, he has provided the warmth of friendship. And, even though that friendship is offered from a male's point of view, the rarity of the gift makes it all the more welcome and all the more an "amazing grace" indeed. Thank you, Andrew Greeley!

PATRICIA A. SCHULTZ

Why I read Greeley

Huntington Beach, Calif.

To the Editors: I read Mary Zeiss Stange's article hoping to clarify my own ambiguous feelings. I did and I didn't.

I did — because I too am repelled with all the thrust-at-us sex(uality) and see no artistic value in lots of the trite character remarks and overworked narrations.

I didn't — because reasons why "Greeley's novels enjoy immense populaity among a largely female readership" were not given.

So, I will give my own. I read Father Greeley's novels for the fascinating storytelling and in order to make more sense of the church. I suspect that many of his readers are doing the same, especially those who have taken the church seriously and have been scarred in the process. I also read Father Greeley's novels because I think he truly *likes* women. . . .

BEV HERRING

A polemical purpose

Providence, R.I.

To the Editors: Permit this admirer of Andrew Greeley to register a dissent to Professor Stange's reading of his work. For that reading seems to me selective and somewhat awry.

My reason is simple. Stange does not find in any of the male characters in Greeley's novels "physical or emotional violence in any way comparable to that routinely undergone by his central female characters." I wonder whether Stange has tested that judgment against the story of the hero of *Patience of a Saint,* who is wholly "done to," rather than "doing," and who suffers both physical and emotional violence in the unfolding of the story of salvation. Indeed, I thought that it was the (male hero's) passive suffering, and the active response to that crisis of the soul, that formed the generative power of the book. The representation of woman as a special revelatory agent of God for man discerned by Stange conforms entirely to the message of that book, among others, and is entirely consistent, as a matter of fact, with the treatment of the male hero. My sense of *Patience of a Saint* is that the male hero acts out the sentence of Jeremiah about Jeremiah: "Thou has seduced me, and I was seduced."

Professor Stange's reading of Greeley's fiction, while in detail defensible, serves a nakedly polemical purpose, directed as it is to make a point and not framed *sine ira et studio.* And my own judgment suggests that Greeley's insistence on the female, as much as the male, character of God, an insistence in line with what makes the Roman Catholic church different from the Protestant communions in its reverence for Mother Mary, for example, explains the (to me entirely well-founded) approval that his fiction has gained from Feminist readers, both male and female.

Still, since much of the mean-spirited hostility suffered by Greeley derives not from *what* he writes in his novels but

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merely from the fact *that* he writes novels, this kind of serious reading of the work, within the affirmation that "he is certainly right about the appropriateness of the narrative mode to pastoral, as well as theological, activity," Greeley's many admirers, who derive both intellectual and religious insight from his brilliant mind, can only affirm Stange's fundamental enterprise, even while differing from some of her judgments.

JACOB NEUSNER

Distortions galore

Chickasha, Okla.

To the Editors: For years Andrew Greeley has insisted that his stories are homilies to help us discover God in our daily lives and especially through our sexual relationships. A number of scholars agree that Greeley's fiction reflects a positive, psychologically sound, and above all supremely *Catholic* theology of the sacramentality of women and sex for those ready to break the ancient bonds of dualism with its distrust of the world.

Mary Zeiss Stange attacks this view. She creates the illusion of objectivity by admitting the legitimacy of narrative theology and castigating hostile reviewers for *ad hominem* methods. Nevertheless, her piece is a poorly disguised, intellectually dishonest, ideologically driven hatchet job.

Stange distorts, perverts, corrupts. Virtually every quote or reference is torn from context, frequently twisted into exactly the opposite of what the author clearly intended. In order to smear Greeley she has turned his artistic and religious vision on its head. With only the ideological justification that Greeley is a male, a priest, and hence, necessarily patriarchal, Stange has violated, it might almost be said raped and castrated, one of the least patriarchal of contemporary literary sensibilities.

With dogmatic zeal, Stange violates the cardinal rules of responsible scholarship, disregarding evidence which might challenge her findings and dismissing scholars who disagree as "comfortable within the confines of patriarchal categories of interpretation."

Stange's comment that Greeley's "sexual imagery recalls less the Song of Songs than it does *The Total Woman*," betrays appalling unfamiliarity. Listen to this bit of marital "pillow talk": "'The girl says to the guy that until the sun goes down, he should roam her body like a gazelle or young stag roams the mountain.' 'Dirty book,' she mumbles." And a few pages later: "The thing is, King Solomon, that your Daughters of Jerusalem tend to have their own herds of gazelles, or, to quote your text . . . their own little foxes." Finally, Eileen snuggles up to Red and quips drowsily "I like it here in Jerusalem" (*Patience of a Saint*). This sounds like *Total Woman*? Ms. Stange has to be kidding.

Stange's fixation on sexual violence in Greeley's stories seems a smoke screen to mask her discomfort with his definition of humanity as issued in two complementary "editions" — male and female — neither of which is complete without the other, two genders whose loving and passionate physical union is the simultaneous re-enactment of Creation, Incarnation, and Resurrection (as consummation of Jesus' marriage to his bride, the church). Her brand of feminism seeks either to neuter "Mother Nature" by abolishing sexual differentiation or to replace patriarchy with a matriarchy of women as aggressively competitive as the most stereotypical male. Why else would she object to Greeley's comment that "the proper goal of feminism is not that women become more macho but that men become more tender"? To argue that this passage indicates that for Greeley "feminism . . . exists to make women more rewarding to men," is a classic example of Stange's contorted logic. The proper conclusion would be that, if Greeley wants men to be more tender, he wants them to be more attractive to women — a possibility which Stange seems to find repugnant.

Would Stange also disagree with Leonardo Boff who writes: "Men will have to integrate the feminine they bear within themselves . . . through the establishment of a new type of male-female relationship that transcends the matriarchal-patriarchal framework" (*The Maternal Face of God*, Harper & Row, 1987)?

Greeley's stories abound with non-patriarchal men. Both Kevin Brennan (*Cardinal Sins*) and Sean Cronin (*Thy Brother's Wife*) overcome their early chauvinism (urged on by strong women); Nick Curran (*Virgin and Martyr*), Mike Casey (*Angels of September*), Red Kane (*Patience of a Saint*), Joe Murphy (supporting character in the *Time Between the Stars* series), and Greeley's paradigmatic priest, Blackie Ryan, all show exceptional non-patronizing gentleness. Stange notes (with disapproval), that "such tenderness as Greeley's women characters receive, they almost universally receive from men." This statement is not true; but why does Stange object to tender men, men of the future who Boff says have integrated the feminine within themselves?

Greeley's "sacramentality of sexuality" flows from his conviction that human beings are most supremely themselves (and like God) when they relate lovingly and intimately to an other, both "The Other" (God) and "the other" (a member of the opposite sex). "Friend-

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ship between a man and a woman, reinforced by the throbbing union of their bodies and preserved and enriched by the sensitive tenderness of their common life, is the model on which all human relationships must be based'' (*A Future to Hope In*).

Stange is only partially correct when she notes that ''Greeley's sacramentality is strictly heterosexual.'' While all friendships are potentially sacramental, the grace experience is purest and most powerful in heterosexual union within a committed and caring relationship.

Stange's conclusion that in Greeley's fictional cosmos ''women cannot be sacraments for each other'' represents a monstrous distortion. Focus on heterosexual sacramentality in no way keeps men and women from becoming agents of grace for members of their own sex, a theme Greeley explores in detail in *The Friendship Game*, and one which appears in many variations throughout his work. In *The Cardinal Sins*, Ellen and Maureen are sacraments for each other; in *Thy Brother's Wife*, Nora's Madonna role includes everyone she touches; Noele, in *Lord of the Dance* ''saves'' her entire family, but most particularly her own mother; Mary Kate, Father Blackie's psychiatrist sister, is Cathy's proverbial ''friend in need'' (*Virgin and Martyr*). Occasionally, such grace-filled encounters even have strong erotic undercurrents, such as Patrick's love for Kevin (*Cardinal Sins*), and Annie Reilly's reactions to Maria Donlon, Mary Kate, and her Polish assistant (*Angels of September*). In addition, Greeley's women as well as men experience God as Mother. Consider one of the most powerful passages in *Thy Brother's Wife*: ''Rarely did the Presence say anything. Rather it absorbed, bathed, and soothed her. Tonight, however, it laughed. Not a sardonic laugh; rather it laughed at her the way she often laughed at Noreen when that teenage tomboy did something particularly wonderful. Everyone, sighed Nora, wants to be a mother. Even you.''

Noele's God, like Nora's, is a God Who loves her like a mother. It is She (and Noele's incomparably tender priest, not luck, as Stange implies) Who heals Noele after the rape; with Her help, ''Noele knew the demons from hell could still touch her, perhaps even hurt her. But they would never prevail against her'' (*Lord of the Dance*).

Any complete treatment of the role of sexuality in human life and as symbol of ultimate reality must come to terms with both its positive ''luminous'' aspect and its corresponding ''shadow'' (in the Jungian sense). Those who condemn Greeley for his (non-graphic) descriptions of actual gang rape in *Lord of the Dance* and *Virgin and Martyr* or psychic-demonic gang rape in *The Angels of September* should turn to Judges 19 and read the tale of the Levite from Ephraim who saves his precious skin by throwing his wife to an angry mob (originally bent on ''abusing'' him!), before going to bed. During the night, she is literally raped to death. In that ancient report the woman is merely a piece of property, while Greeley focuses on the plight of the victim who is seen as suffering a form of crucifixion.

Greeley realizes that by subjecting himself to torture and a demeaning death, Christ accepted an archetypally feminine role, and that violent sexual degradation is the contemporary equivalent of being nailed to the cross. The brutalization of women in Greeley's stories is inexorably linked to his emphasis on Divine Femininity. ''God the Father gave His only Beloved Son'' is transformed into ''God the Mother gave Her only Beloved Daughter.''

Even Stange recognizes Greeley's motif of Woman Crucified. She seems, however, blind to the profound theological implications of her own insight. Greeley no more presents the brutalization of women as paradigmatic than the Gospel writers intended to present our Lord's suffering as a lesson in sadism.

Consider Cathy (*Virgin and Martyr*) who in a sense has died in the course of her imprisonment, torture, and rape, her alter ego ''buried'' in the Rio Seco crypt. This death, however, constitutes the death of the lifeless shell of a woman already murdered by the church during her novitiate. Her double death becomes a new birth; the butterfly emerges from the chrysalis. Having passed through death and rebirth, she becomes a sacrament of redemption, a living conduit of love, grace, and transformation for others.

Cathy is a Christ figure, a sacrament *par excellence*, a risen savior bringing grace to all, even her beloved cousin, Father Blackie. Such a vision can be called patriarchal under only one condition: the only literary sensibility which is not patriarchal is one which, because of its hatred for men, utterly rejects as a mistake a creation of human-kind, male and female. Stange presents us with only two choices: patriarchal sensibility and quasi-lesbian sensibility. A lesbian Andrew Greeley is not.

INGRID H. SHAFER

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The author replies:

That violence directed toward women is indeed a fact of life does not render this violence in any way acceptable. Andrew Greeley's writings, and the favorable responses to them printed here, reflect a trend of thinking which not only accepts, but in some strange sense celebrates the abuse of women. In real life, women become better human beings in spite, not because, of physical and emotional abuse. To suggest, as Greeley explicitly does, that undergoing sexual abuse can be for women a necessary step toward spiritual maturity is to pervert the idea of redemptive suffering. If this is sacramental theology at all, then at best it is bad sacramental theology.

Some of Andrew Greeley's followers are evidently as incapable of squarely facing objective criticism as he himself so notoriously is. Hence, as in Ingrid Shafer's letter, they resort to the age-old dodge of claiming quotations were taken "out of context." Aside from noting that with regard to the specific instances cited in my article this simply is not true, I would emphasize that — much more importantly — "context" can cover a multitude of sins, perhaps especially when the context is theology. This century has seen theological justifications of racism, fascism, homophobia, and of course sexism. The broader context of Greeley's novels is the schizophrenic patriarchal theology which justified female suffering by on the one hand embracing it as part of the human condition, while on the other romanticizing it as "Christlike." One might recall that Jesus himself was strongly opposed to the abuse of women in his own time and place, and might well himself have trouble with Shafer's embracing the view that "violent sexual degradation is the contemporary equivalent" of crucifixion.

Greeley's groupies also follow his lead in reducing their opponents to stereotypes, in making wild and unsupportable generalizations, and in charging opposing views with logical inconsistency when their own logic is questionable. Hence, for example, Patricia Schultz readily assumes that a criticism of Greeley's point of view must reflect opposition to the "male" point of view. Similarly, Shafer comfortably infers that a challenge to Greeley's understanding of sexual integration and a mention of his tendency toward homophobia could only come from a "quasi-lesbian" hater of men, intent upon replacing patriarchy with mother-rule. Such misapprehensions deserve no response, other than to take note of the sexist logic on which they are based. This logic of either/or, "them-versus-us" thinking, characteristic of the patriarchal perspective at its most unreflectively childish level, is perhaps most obviously at work in the letter from the Marsdens. What more sexist claim can be made than that women are more saintly than men, and "there is more God in femaleness than in maleness"? (How exactly does this relate to the Marsdens' absurd remark that in pornography — a term I would not use with regard to Greeley's novels — women are in "complete control"?)

As to the more reasonable support of Greeley's novels represented by Professor Neusner's letter, he and I may agree to disagree; this makes for constructive dialogue. However, need I remind this foremost American scholar of Judaica that all meaningful criticism is more or less explicitly rooted in a polemic of some kind? This is especially true in the theological arena. It is the struggling with ideas and images which distinguishes the living spirit from that dead letter so often championed by the Western tradition as "dispassionate inquiry."

For the record, *Patience of a Saint* was published too late to be considered in my article.

I am gratified by the vigorous discussion generated by my work, because of the reflection such discussion in its turn generates. Greeley represents in his writings a point of view which, because of its large-scale acceptance, warrants serious, fair-minded, and mature scrutiny.

MARY ZEISS STANGE

Correction: In Daniel A. Degnan's "Bound by the Constitution" (Sept. 11), the reference to Ronald Dworkin's article should have been: "Bork the Radical," Aug. 13, 1987, *New York Review of Books*.

THE EDITORS

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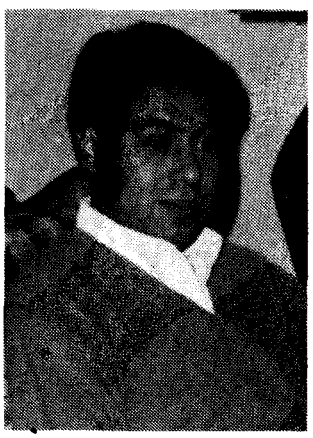

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